

**A History of Mountain Climbing  
in New Zealand  
to 1953**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in History  
by Graham Langton**

**University of Canterbury  
1996**

## Acknowledgements

The years spent on this thesis have left me in debt to many people whom I wish to acknowledge:

- Dr Len Richardson, my supervisor, without whom there would have been no thesis
- Many other History Dept staff at both Canterbury and Massey Universities, especially Basil Poff
- many librarians and archivists around the country, especially Linda Clark of Radio New Zealand Sound Archives, and Jo-Anne Smith of the Canterbury Museum Archives who has never failed to cheer me up
- my children, Michael, Veronica and Kathy, who have done their best to ignore my interest in History, and have put up with much less attention than they deserve. Michael's computer skills were invaluable
- my wife Elaine, who has supported me in so many ways, especially financially and emotionally
- the many old climbers (and their relatives) who have willingly given of their time and memories

My grateful thanks to you all, and to everyone else who has contributed in any way.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the development of recreational mountain climbing in New Zealand from before 1840 to the 1950s. This small facet of social history illustrates certain aspects of the evolution of the wider New Zealand society. A variety of influences from overseas, especially from Britain, impacted on New Zealand mountain climbing. However, it always showed indigenous characteristics and the local elements became more distinct. After the First World War club organisation and activity independent of guides came to dominate, as mountaineering based on tramping became the norm. Issues of class were resolved but the participation of women was problematic. In the interwar years, mountaineering began to be identified with earlier pioneering and with male physical culture. This led to a more egalitarian recreation but within climbing the evolution of a masculinist culture meant that the place of women remained ambiguous and their progress was limited. Redevelopment of climbing after the Second World War led to the ascent of Mt Everest by Edmund Hillary in 1953 which crystallised many of the long-term features of New Zealand mountain climbing. It was a restatement of imperial ties, and it confirmed male dominance, but it was also a notable step forward in the internationalisation of New Zealand mountaineers. More importantly, Everest marked the inclusion of the mountaineer in the New Zealand identity which had been previously developed through pioneering, sport and war.





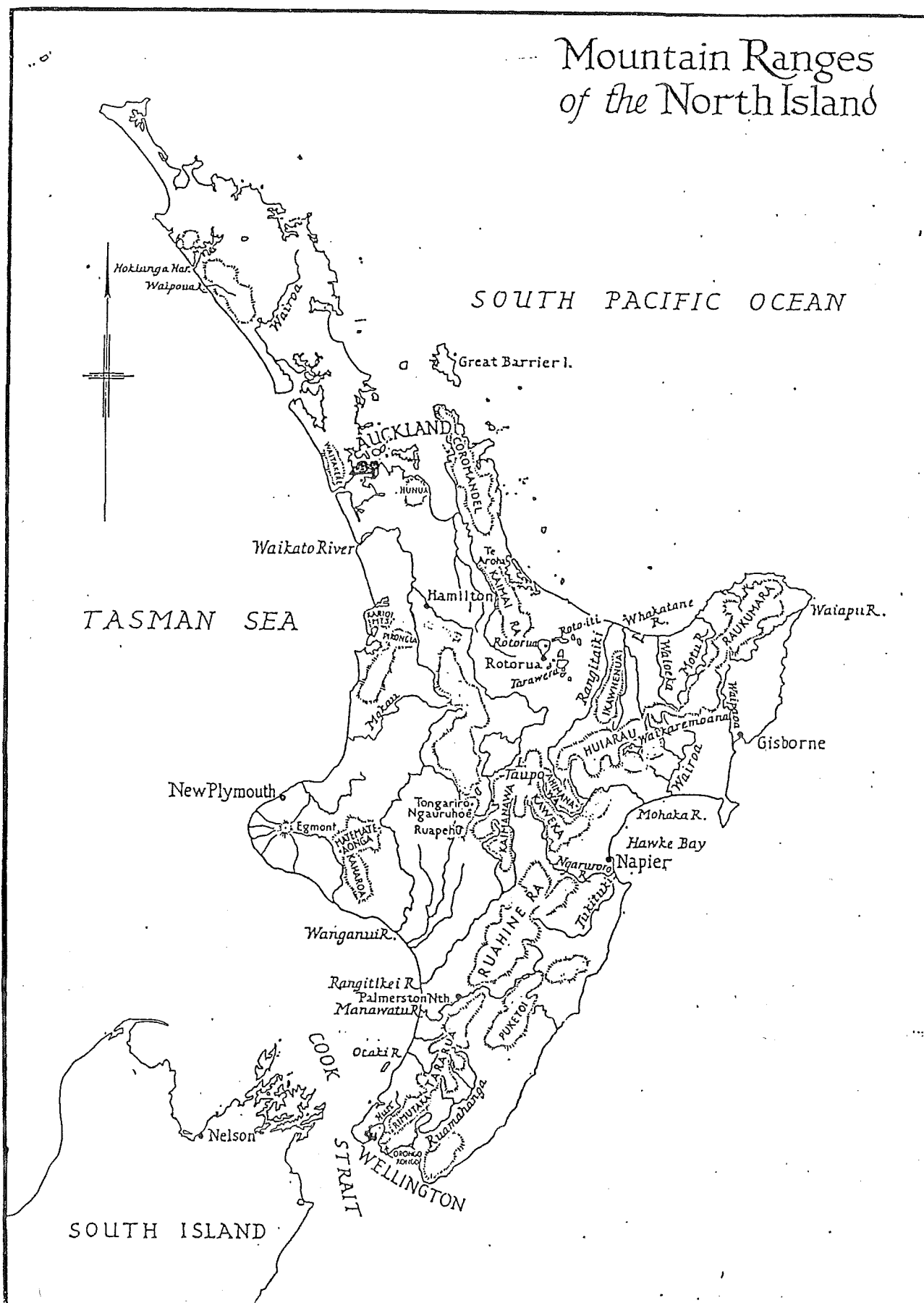
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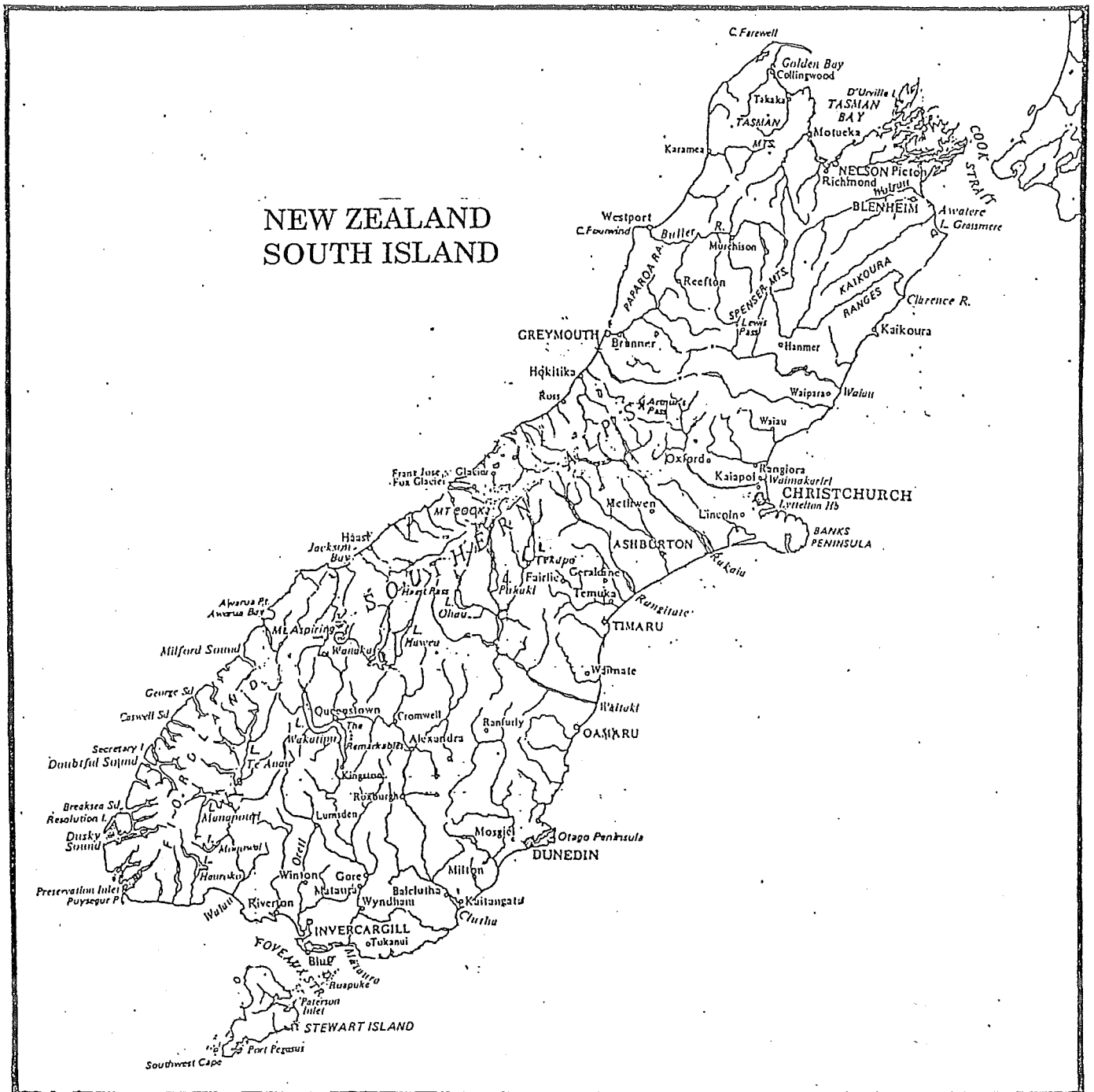
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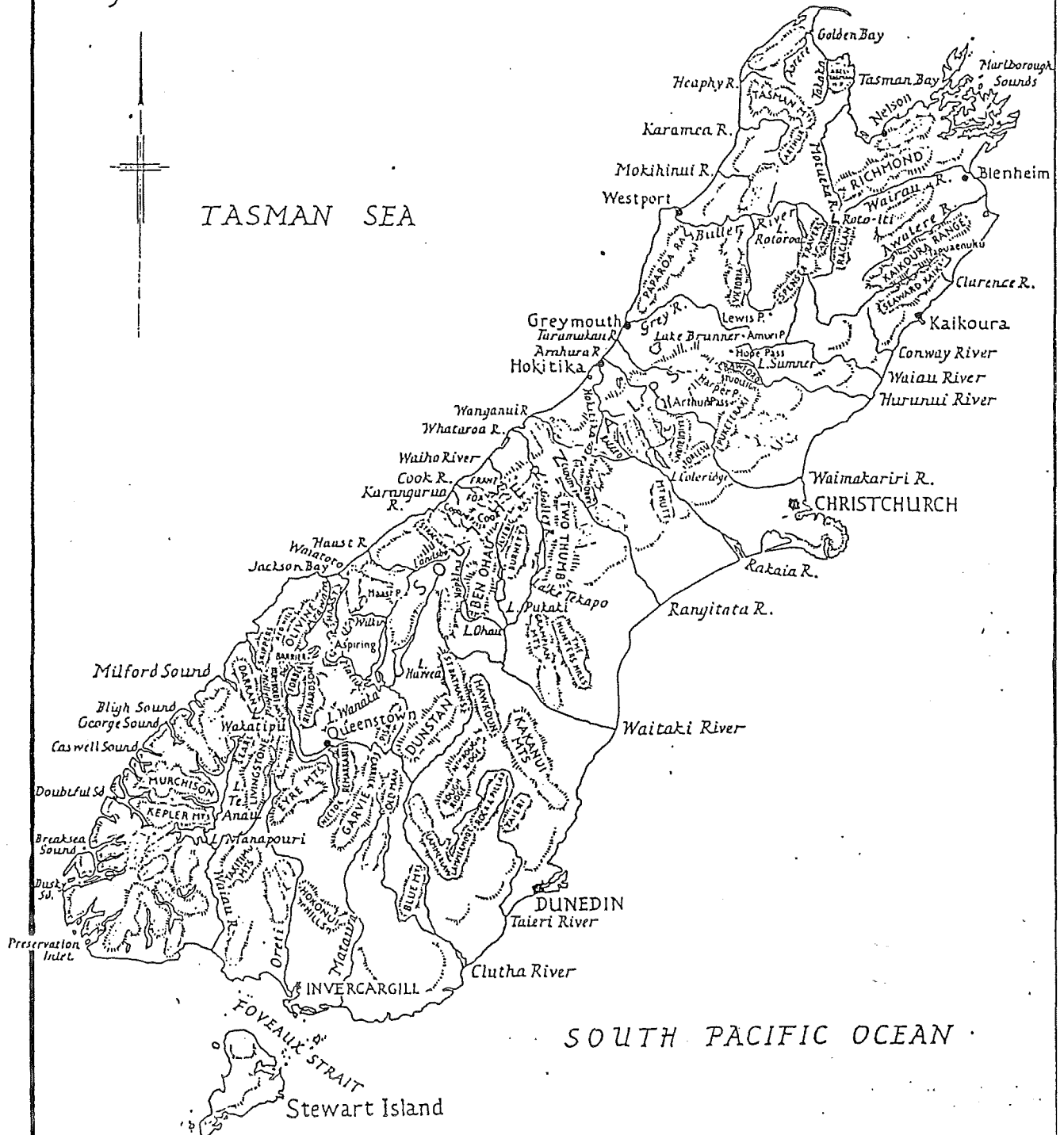
- 8 New Zealand North Island  
from J Pascoe *Explorers & Travellers* Wellington 1983
- 9 Mountain Ranges of the North Island  
from R Hewitt & M Davidson *The Mountains of New Zealand* Wellington 1954
- 10 New Zealand South Island  
from J Pascoe *Explorers & Travellers* Wellington 1983
- 11 Mountain Ranges of the South Island  
from R Hewitt & M Davidson *The Mountains of New Zealand* Wellington 1954
- 12 Tongariro National Park  
from J Graham *Ruaapehu* Wellington 1963
- 13 Mount Cook & adjacent regions  
from H E Connor ed *Mount Cook National Park* MCNP Board 5th ed 1973
- 14 Mt Aspiring to Milford Sound

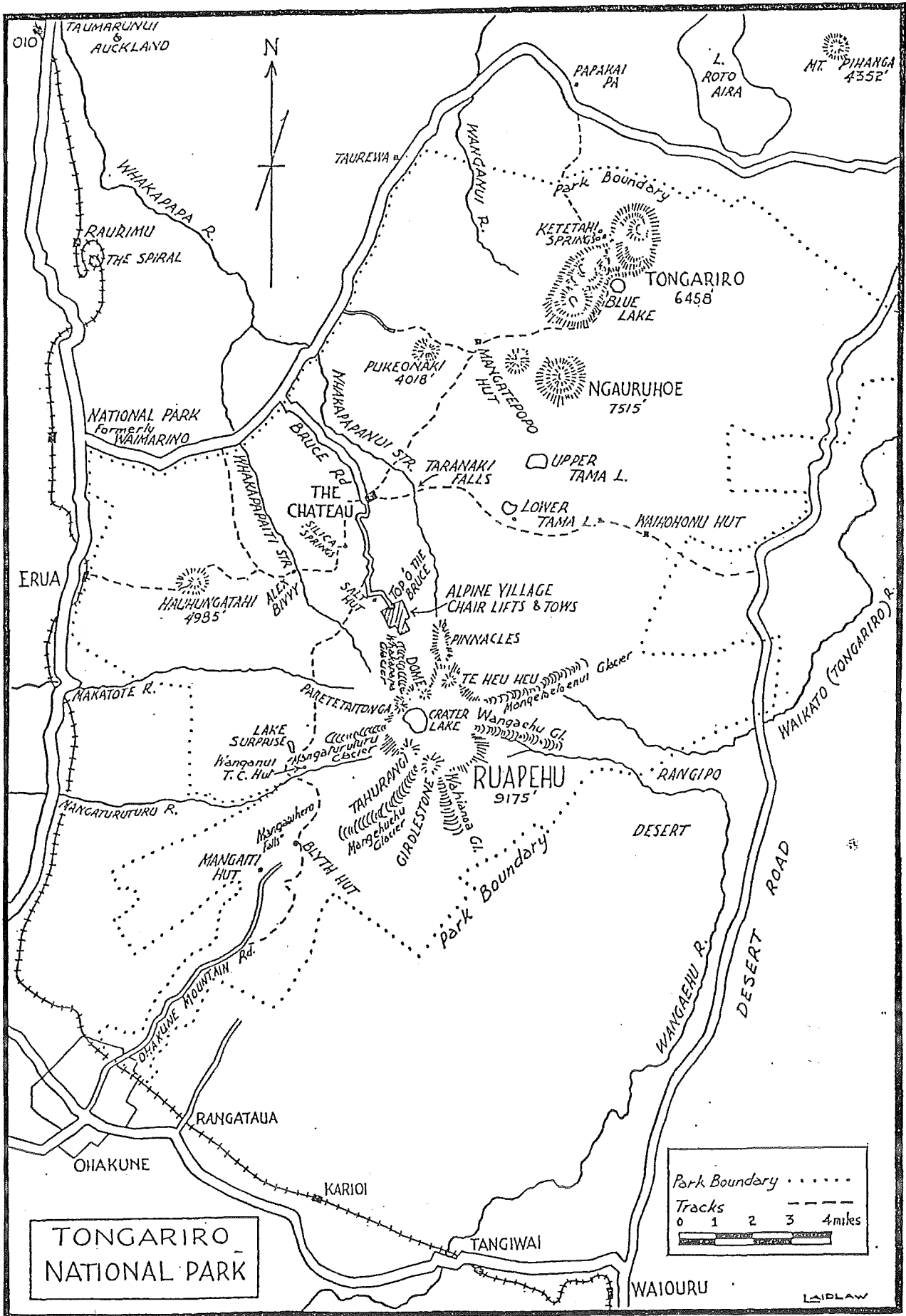
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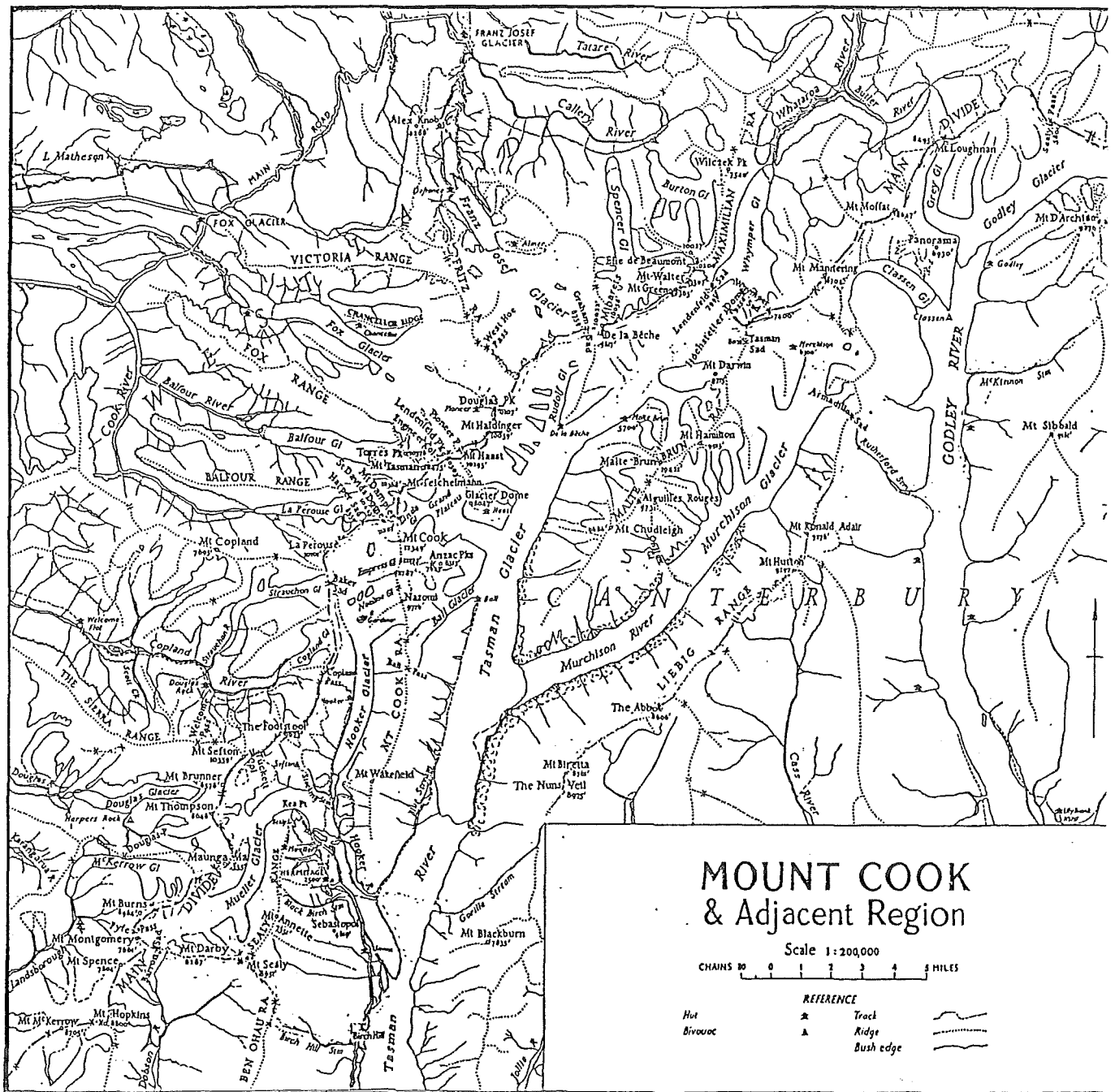




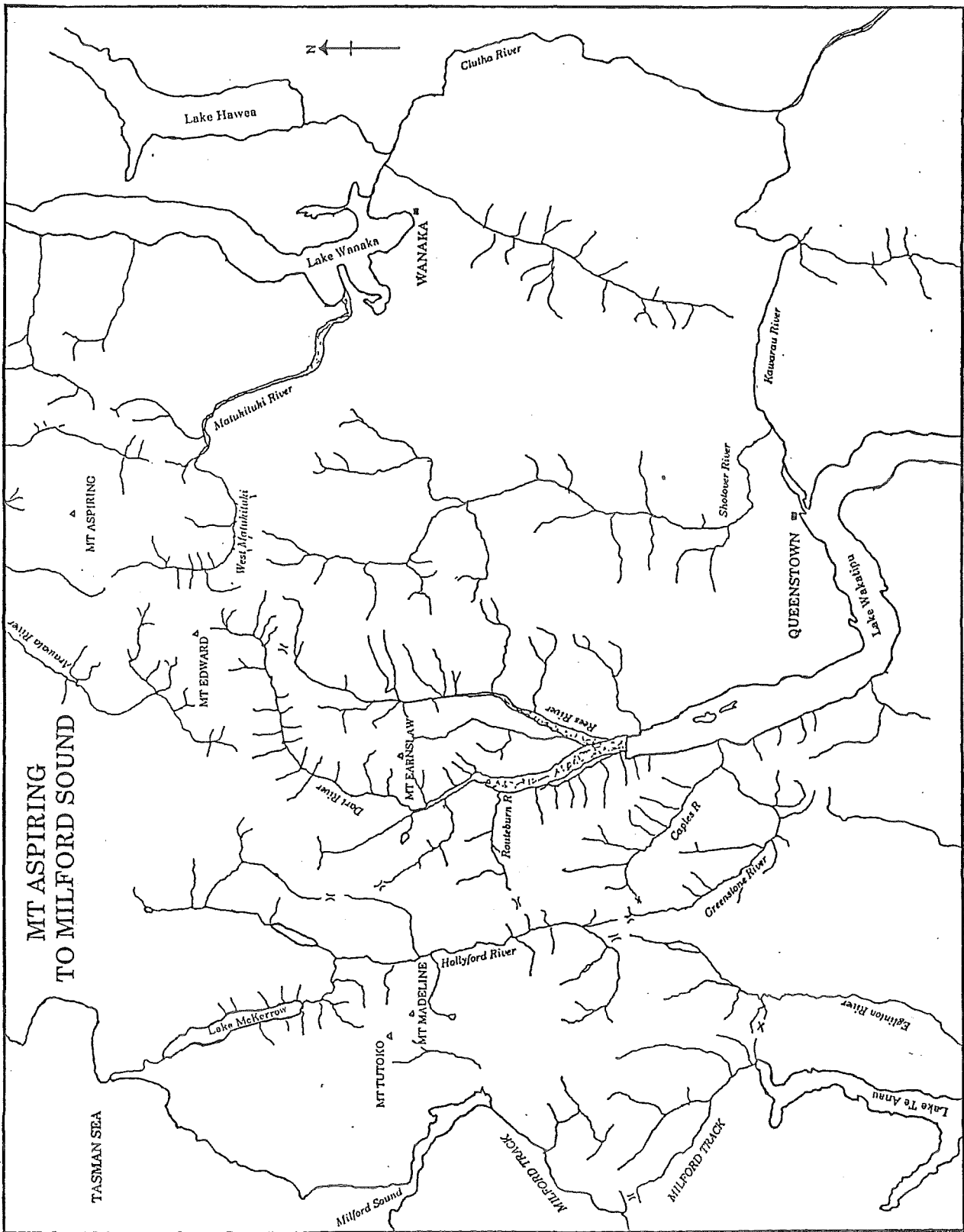












## MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS

All mountain heights are given in feet, as the form of measurement used in the period covered by this thesis.

### FEET TO METRES

6000	1829
6250	1905
6500	1981
6750	2057
7000	2134
7250	2210
7500	2286
7750	2362
8000	2438
8250	2515
8500	2591
8750	2667
9000	2743
9250	2819
9500	2896
9750	2972
10000	3048
10250	3124
10500	3200
10750	3277
11000	3353
11250	3429
11500	3505
11750	3581
12000	3658
12250	3734
12500	3810

### METRES TO FEET

2000	6564
2100	6892
2200	7220
2300	7549
2400	7877
2500	8205
2600	8533
2700	8861
2800	9190
2900	9518
3000	9846
3100	10174
3200	10502
3300	10831
3400	11159
3500	11487
3600	11815
3700	12143
3800	12472
3900	12800
4000	13128

## A NOTE ON CURRENCY

The money of the period was pounds, shillings and pence, designated £ s d. Where possible this has been related to wages and prices to give some idea of value at the time

## ABBREVIATIONS

AC	The Alpine Club (London)
advert	advertisement
AJ	<i>Alpine Journal</i> (London)
ATC	Auckland Tramping Club
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library Wellington
BJSH	<i>The British Journal of Sports History</i>
BWI	Brian Wyn Irwin scrapbooks, Canterbury University
CCFM	New Zealand Alpine Club Committee Fair Minutes
CM	<i>The Canterbury Mountaineer</i>
CMA	Alpine Collection Canterbury Museum Archives
CMC	Canterbury Mountaineering Club
CU	Canterbury University
Dept	Department
DNZB	<i>Dictionary of New Zealand Biography</i> Vol 1 W H Oliver ed 1990, Vol 2 C Orange ed 1993
ed(s)	editor(s)
ft	feet
govt	government
Hocken	Hocken Library Dunedin
IJHS	<i>The International Journal of the History of Sport</i>
LBE	<i>New Zealand Alpine Journal</i> Letter Book Editor
m	metres
mm	millimetres
Mitchell	Mitchell Library Sydney
MS	manuscript
No	number
NZAC	New Zealand Alpine Club
NZAJ	<i>New Zealand Alpine Journal</i>
NZAC Arch	NZAC Archives Hocken Library Dunedin
NZ Herald	<i>New Zealand Herald</i> (Auckland)

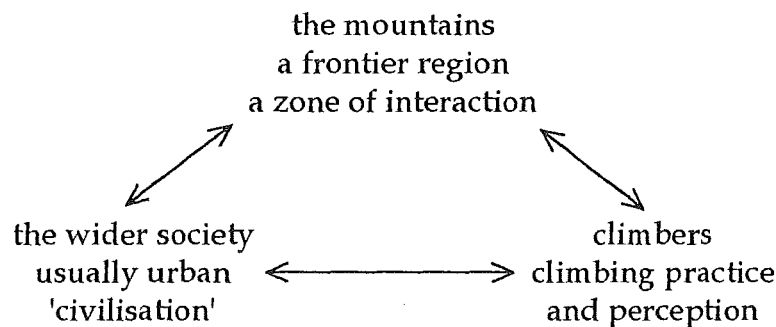
NZJS	<i>New Zealand Journal of Science</i>
NZ Life	<i>New Zealand Life and Forest Magazine</i>
<i>Oxford History</i>	W H Oliver with B Williams eds <i>Oxford History of New Zealand</i> Wellington 1981
ODT	<i>Otago Daily Times</i>
OU	Otago University
OW	<i>Otago Witness</i>
PC	personal communication
PP	Persoanl Papers
<i>Press</i>	<i>The Press</i> (Christchurch)
pub	published
rev ed	revised edition
SLB	New Zealand Alpine Club Secretary's Letter Book
supp	supplement, to newspaper
TC	tramping club
TNZI	Transactions of the New Zealand Institute
TTC	Tararua Tramping Club
UP	University Press
Vol	Volume
VUCTC	Victoria University College Tramping Club (Wellington)
WAK	William A Kennedy Scrapbook, Canterbury Museum Archives
WT&MC	Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club



## A HISTORY OF MOUNTAIN CLIMBING IN NEW ZEALAND TO 1953

This thesis is a study of one interaction between the natural world and the 'civilised', largely urban, world of people in New Zealand. The interaction is mountain climbing, which is a social construct, an aspect of 'civilisation' not of nature. However, it occurs in a specific zone of interaction, the mountains, which are prominent features of the natural environment. They are a frontier region for 'civilisation', a zone at the edge of society, beyond the commonly known.

There has been a three-way interaction centred on the mountains which can be systematised in the following diagram.



Change in any one of these three areas led to change in the others, making for a complexity of circumstance, practice, motivation and legitimation which enabled people to interact with the natural world through climbing. The setting for climbing was the mountain region, but that zone of interaction was never an active agent for change. Most of the alteration in the mountain setting came from developments in 'civilised' society, its increasing acceptance of the mountains and intrusion into them. As the human world changed, so did climbers, in their perceptions, expectations and practices. Through their own activity, and changing attitudes and requirements, the climbers themselves were agents of 'civilisation', bringing some modification to the mountain world. In New Zealand climbing focused on peaks over 7000ft (2134m) in height which normally had some snow and ice cover even in summer. Their ascent

usually required specialist equipment - a minimum of boots, ice axe and rope - and the use of these indicated the specific intention of moving out of the 'civilised' world in an attempt to reach mountain summits. For many years exploration was a prerequisite to climbing, and after 1920 tramping became an important mountain recreation. Together all these activities in the mountains made up what was generally termed mountaineering.

The interaction in New Zealand between the mountains, society, and individual climbers took place against a fourfold background of local, national, imperial and international developments. Climbing in New Zealand was significantly influenced by individuals and concepts from all of these levels. Local and national circumstances and changes were always significant, but New Zealand was not immune to overseas trends, and aspects of empire were most important for the instigation and progress of climbing. In particular, external factors had an impact on the organisation of recreational climbing, though in time local patterns emerged. Within New Zealand the general public often showed ambivalence towards climbing as a sport, and much of the growth and development stemmed from individual or small group initiative. Throughout much of the history of mountain climbing in New Zealand there were difficulties in defining both climbers and climbing, especially in terms of class and gender. Some problems resulted from the specific New Zealand situation. Others were created by the differences between overseas climbing patterns and local mountaineering practices.

Climbing came to New Zealand as one aspect of British culture, though it was brought by visitors rather than migrants. Sporting recreation was an integral part of the British middle-class imperialistic process of bringing 'civilisation' to other lands and peoples.<sup>1</sup> In the last thirty years of the nineteenth century team sports from Britain, such as rugby and cricket, began to assume a significant

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<sup>1</sup> J Mangan (ed) *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire and Society* London 1992 p1-9 & passim

place and role in New Zealand, not just for recreation, but for the imposition of middle-class socialisation and discipline in an increasingly urban society. Climbing was a little different since it did not have such a direct social purpose. While for some people in Britain, and later New Zealand, climbing was an acceptable middle-class recreation, its remoteness, apparent danger and relative individualism meant there was always doubt about its validity. This occurred in spite of the fact that British society in the middle of the nineteenth century underwent something of a redefinition of attitudes to work and non-work which came to be called leisure. Some historians, most notably N Elias and E Dunning,<sup>2</sup> have identified as a central ingredient in this process a growing "quest for excitement" as 'civilised' life and work became more and more predictable. For some middle-class British, climbing mountains in Europe satisfied this desire for excitement. For others world-wide imperialism provided a necessary scope and setting.

Such a deliberate "quest for excitement" had less relevance within new societies where 'civilisation', as experienced and defined by the 'Old World', was at best only tenuously present. It is possible that the very act of migration gave expression to the growing quest among some sections of British society for a challenging new frontier. Perhaps later the increasingly settled nature of New Zealand society led to a new search for 'excitement', one manifestation of which was climbing. Whatever the validity of this hypothesis, the role of the experienced British climber in the transference of this particular aspect of British culture to New Zealand is a fundamental one. Just as significant, however, is the emergence of local customs and practices as the 'frontier' encouraged adaptation and improvisation. As there evolved New Zealand ways of doing things, the visiting climber from 'Home' was less likely to be seen as a mentor. At the same time, New Zealand climbers identified their

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<sup>2</sup> *Quest for Excitement Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* Oxford 1986



recreation with manliness in similar fashion to British middle-class climbers. This was modified in the interwar years as more egalitarian New Zealand mountaineering started to become identified with the masculine physical culture so prominent in war and team sports.

It is possible to identify four major periods in the history of New Zealand mountain climbing up to the 1950s. There were, of course, many continuities, but, in this thesis, these periods are used to structure an investigation of the three-way interaction model previously outlined and the different levels of development which influenced climbing. There was considerable influence from overseas but it was erratic in its application, and the isolation of New Zealand climbers was sometimes a significant factor. Before about 1880 there was a pre-climbing period when society was developing rapidly and approaching the mountains more nearly, but there was no actual alpine climbing. Pioneering climbing, with as much focus on discovery as on summits, featured from 1880 to about 1900 and a club was established to formalise this aspect of continuing European exploration. From the turn of the century up to the 1920s tourism became a new basis for more climbing, and a guided climbing system replaced the club as the basic organisation of the recreation. From the 1920s tramping, self-contained travel through the mountains, provided another infrastructural basis for climbing, and gave a new emphasis to self-reliance. Compared to participation in many other sports and recreations, the number of climbers was never high, but mountaineering did become increasingly popular after the First World War, and from the 1930s it moved towards a place in the national identity which was confirmed in 1953.

Before 1880 the three-part model set out above is scarcely relevant. There were simply no alpine climbers in New Zealand. For Maori there were practical difficulties and little purpose in ascending peaks. The 'tapu' or sacred nature of some mountains also prevented ascents. Europeans focused on searching for routes and resources, and on defining and appropriating the land for

themselves. In this process 'civilisation' was extended further into mountain regions and peaks became more specifically identified and defined. A few people reached summits, perhaps for surveying purposes. The activity was little more than energetic walking uphill since there was no use of the techniques or equipment of alpine climbing. Scientific study was also limited in its penetration of the mountains, though in Europe it had been an initial basis for climbing. Overall, the concept of recreational mountaineering seemed of little relevance in the new colony.

Pioneering climbing began in the early 1880s and flourished briefly in the 1890s. This was stimulated by two occasions in 1882-3 of overseas climbers ascending or trying to ascend major New Zealand peaks. They set an example of climbing as both appropriation of the landscape and adventurous recreation. Without continuing models, a small number of New Zealanders learned about climbing through their own practice, and from overseas by reading and correspondence. The focus was on the Mt Cook and Lake Wakatipu mountain regions, and improved transport and other extension of 'civilisation', most usefully in the form of tracks and huts, was encouraged by these pioneer climbers. Their recreation was supported by the beginning of tourism, and the building of the first Hermitage near Mt Cook was a significant extension of the human world into that area. Then there was a brief burst of climbing which included the first ascent of Mt Cook in 1894. Society did not always approve of climber efforts, but in both the exploration and the climbing there was domination of the landscape satisfactory to the wider society. Progress led to an attempt to shape climbing through the creation of the first climbing club in 1891. However, a variety of problems caused this organisation to be short-lived.

A different formalisation of climbing dominated the activity from about 1900 to the 1920s. 'Civilisation' reached further into certain mountain areas through roads, bridges, tracks and huts. It was also extended more quickly through the use of the motor vehicle. Mt Cook, the Franz Josef glacier and Lake Wakatipu

became centres of tourism, passive and active, and the latter might include climbing. With greater permanence of settlement in such places came the provision of regular help for visitors to the mountains. From the 1890s the European idea of using working class men as mountain guides was applied to New Zealand. They were to look after people in the mountains, show them the sights and lead them up peaks. Though a few independent climbers continued activity in the lesser known mountain frontier, after 1900 guides dominated and codified climbing for the wider society. It was the well-off in society who could afford guides, and their use enabled an increasing number of women to climb. The First World War narrowed activity but did not prevent it.

From the 1920s self-contained journeying in the New Zealand mountains, in the bush, along valleys, and over passes, became increasingly popular. This tramping, as it was known, and the clubs which were formed to support it, became the foundation of a local form of mountaineering, based on expeditions and exploration which linked them to previous pioneering. In time the peaks became the focus for many of these mountaineers, and they sought to climb independent of both guides and overseas models. Tramping was a much cheaper means of getting into the mountains than guided climbing, and it made recreation available to a much younger and less affluent section of urban society. The Depression had surprisingly little impact on climbing, and the increasing number of clubs meant a new and more widespread formalisation of mountain activity. Individual initiative remained important but increasingly within a group context. In the clubs there were always people who wished not just to tramp but to reach the summits. They also searched increasingly for the remote and unknown. Yet by their very activities, these new younger exploratory climbers extended the knowledge and scope of the 'civilised' world further into the mountain region. They also steadily broadened what was perceived to be possible in climbing. A little influence from overseas could not disguise the fact that the increasingly dominant expeditionary tramping and climbing were clearly indigenous.

The concept of climbing remained much the same throughout the whole period, centred round a desire to reach mountain summits. Always this involved the stimulus of challenge and risk. At the individual level, measuring mental and physical fitness, skill and experience against the dangers and difficulties of the mountain world gave considerable motivation and legitimation to the activity. Yet to a wider society seeking order, the 'quest for excitement' in risk-taking was of debatable value. In this sense climbing was deliberate deviation from the norm of 'civilised' urban society, for it was an unusual recreation. But climbers in New Zealand up to the 1950s were not so deviant that they might be mistaken for delinquents, and in the public arena they nearly always glossed over the dangers which were a major challenge to them. They searched for difficulty in the mountains but this was not usually an attempt to escape from ordinary life. It was a form of play participated in for a time in the realisation that it was only a temporary activity.<sup>3</sup>

Much of the process of climbing always occurred away from the mountains, usually in an urban setting where individuals, groups and clubs ritualised the climbing experience. Before a trip there was anticipation of pleasure or achievement, which was combined with planning, organisation and preparation, in the form of acquiring knowledge, fitness or equipment. Then came travel to the mountains and the climbing trip which itself was a temporary sojourn in the mountains. Afterwards there was a return to the original setting, and recapitulation of the climb through oral and written discourse, visual images, and planning for future trips. Apart from paid professional guides, even the keenest climbers spent a comparatively small proportion of their lives in the mountains. Yet the intensity that this process sometimes engendered, and the desire to achieve something that was novel, led to competition and possessiveness which male mateship and club organisation modified but could not eliminate.

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<sup>3</sup> M J Ellis *Why People Play* Englewood Cliffs N.J. 1973 passim; R G Mitchell *Mountain Experience: The Psychology and Sociology of Adventure* Chicago 1983 passim; Elias and Dunning p40-90 passim

Throughout the period there was a steady reduction of the unknown in the New Zealand mountains. Both climbers and the wider society were responsible for this. Climbers encouraged development in the form of huts and tracks which allowed them to reach further and more easily into the unknown. Knowledge was continually expanded, and as transport routes, buildings and urbanised settlement moved further into the mountain zone, its nature was modified. Climbing, the development of other mountain recreations, and a setting for them in national parks, were all encouraged by greater knowledge, changed attitudes and the expansion of 'civilisation'. With knowledge, both personal, and vicarious in the form of maps, accounts and photographs, came familiarity. These factors appeared to reduce the unknown, and to diminish the mountain recreational resource. However, they also gave the mountain world, and remoteness in particular, greater value to society and to climbers. There appeared to be less potential for novelty in the form of first ascents or new routes, but climbers continually searched for them. The weather and varying conditions also altered the mountain region continuously, providing another unknown. The possibilities of climbing were steadily expanded with changed attitudes, improved skill and better equipment, so that a considerable frontier and field for climbing always existed.

Mountaineering became increasingly popular, though the number of its proponents was always small in comparison to many other sports and recreations in New Zealand. There were difficulties in deciding just who could and should climb, and, in particular, the place of women climbers was not easy to determine because of underlying social attitudes and an increasing male dominance of mountaineering, especially in the interwar period. There were also problems in achieving a satisfactory formalisation of climbing activity. Individual initiative was always significant in climbing, but there were attempts to create a collective identity through the creation of a mountain club or clubs. However, the dominant organisation in climbing for much of the first half of the twentieth century was provided by the services of mountain guides. Both guided climbing and the concept of club led, in terms of class and gender,

to difficulties of acceptance and participation which were never fully resolved in either the recreation itself or in the wider society. Many climbers were reasonably well-off and middle-aged, especially before 1930. Climbing was an almost exclusively European or Pakeha activity, and predominantly male. Increasingly it drew energy from prevailing conceptions of masculinity, and there were always some elements of English class structure in the organisation of New Zealand climbing. Inclusion in the systems of climbing, whether guides or clubs, were influenced by wealth, class, gender and amateur or professional status. While it was not usually easy for anyone to climb, there could be more difficulties for women, or working-class men.

Restrictions on who might go climbing were linked to the nature of climbing as an activity. Though summits were always important, so was exploration, and both were more than just physical achievement and a simple search for the unknown. Mountain activity was a significant part of European appropriation of a new land. The agency of discovery was male, often individual, and might involve people of any societal level. However, the desire for possession of the landscape came from a wider society dominated by educated and well-off gentlemen, the sort of people who were initially prominent in climbing. The concept of 'conquest' of mountains always existed, more as a public attitude than in the minds of individual climbers. Achievement of a summit is not quite the same as conquest of a mountain, or of Nature, though public expression would often hold it to be so. Climbers were not immune to feelings of conquest but their perception of their achievement and of the mountains usually went much further. Involved were a complexity of motivations, satisfactions and emotions, and a sense of belonging. The non-climbing public could not fully comprehend all this, whereas the idea of achievement as conquest was easily understood and applauded.

The history of mountain climbing in New Zealand has always been characterised by tension between climbers and the wider society, an incongruence between independence and integration. There was always public

uncertainty about whether climbing was a legitimate activity since it lacked economic rationality and its danger and the energy required made it an unusual leisure pursuit. Many people had difficulty accepting justifications offered by the climbing fraternity which rested primarily upon psychological need. To argue that climbing enabled a physical, emotional and spiritual recreation of self, and thus enriched both ordinary life and society as a whole, was to invite ridicule or cynical disbelief. The 'civilised' world had mixed feelings about frontier activity because it appeared to be uncontrolled, and thus a possible threat to human and political order. The mountain world was well known to few, so this frontier setting remained foreign to most of society. In a developing society such as Pakeha New Zealand, the search for security and stability implied control by either external authority or self. The rules climbers developed for themselves were not clear to the wider community, and no one could know quite what climbers got up to in the mountains. They also occasionally killed themselves which emphasised the apparent pointlessness of the activity. A voluntary search for adventure in the form of challenge, danger and risk was anathema to many in society.

Yet throughout this period masculinity, involving male physical prowess and mateship, was prized in New Zealand, and provided some positive basis in society for mountain climbing. As Jock Phillips explains,<sup>4</sup> the Victorian concept of manliness took on a particular twist in New Zealand, becoming associated with pioneering toughness. This was the ability to be independent and capable in even the most difficult circumstances provided by humanity or nature, and early climbers fitted this mold. Furthermore, it could be desirable for members of an increasingly soft urbanised world to seek physical challenge in the natural world, as part of an effort to maintain the fitness of the race for a wider imperialism. After 1930 climbers more obviously matched this New Zealand ideal of manliness and in their activities they created a male fraternity similar to that found in team sports and war. Climbers belonged to an all-male frontier

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<sup>4</sup> "Mummy's Boys" in P Bunkle & B Hughes eds *Women in New Zealand Society* Auckland 1980 p217-43; *A Man's Country?* Auckland 1987 passim

world, of pioneering egalitarianism and close male mateship, a world which valued physical toughness, versatility and independence. Progress towards identification with the national male image gave considerable impetus to interwar climbing. However, it also increased the ambiguity of the position of women in climbing. Guides and then clubs made it possible for them to climb, but an increasing domination by men limited the involvement of women.

The link to male physical culture and national identity was emphasised, for climbers, by an awareness that their activity in New Zealand was a little different from that elsewhere in the world. One key contrast made was that exploratory and expeditionary mountaineering was much less 'civilised' than hut-based guided climbing in Europe. New Zealanders were not just climbers, but mountaineers, able to travel and survive in the mountains as well as reach the summits. To a considerable extent such development came about through necessity, with so much of the mountain region comparatively unknown and inaccessible. In this context, as much importance might be given to the journey and exploration as to reaching actual summits. The hard work of expeditions and the skill range they required created independence and adaptability, qualities which were highly valued not just among the climbing fraternity but also in the wider society.

The rugged expeditioner had appeared in New Zealand climbing as early as the 1880s. He was the typical New Zealand climber from about 1930 and merged well with the Pakeha male image of pioneering toughness. This culminated in the first ascent of Mt Everest by Edmund Hillary in 1953 and his subsequent iconisation. Hillary was just one of many New Zealand climbers in the 1940s and 1950s, but his portrayal, because of his success, as the archetypal heroic male, symbol of all the qualities of manliness, crystallised much of the tradition and myth of the New Zealand male. This had been developing for a century, but only with Hillary's success on Everest were climbers clearly incorporated into the mainstream image of the New Zealand male, and only then did climbing establish a considerable public profile.





## CHAPTER ONE

## TOWARDS A NEW FRONTIER

Climbing, as an interaction on high peaks between individuals, their society and the natural world, hardly existed in New Zealand before 1880. British settlers in the new colony initially saw mountains as barriers to exploration and exploitation rather than as a setting for recreation. As Pakeha<sup>1</sup> settlement intensified between 1840 and 1880, the mountains were more frequently and closely approached. Ascents occurred but they were neither difficult nor high enough to be termed alpine climbs, and they were for practical rather than recreational purposes. Yet this same period saw the development and flourishing of high climbing in Europe as a recreation for upper middle-class Britons.<sup>2</sup>

The key to the lack of climbing in New Zealand was an incomplete cultural transference from Britain. Culture which incorporated mountain climbing had to come from the other side of the world since there was no Maori tradition of ascending high mountains, and settlers migrated not for recreational opportunities but to establish a new and better European society. Much of the culture relevant to climbing was brought to New Zealand before 1880, including Romantic attitudes towards the mountains, scientific discovery, and a tradition of travel to out of the way places. However, not all aspects of British or European culture could be transferred at this time because of the circumstances in the colony and the nature of its developing society and natural environment. Making a living was the major preoccupation and adventure usually had a practical purpose. There were few people with leisure time for distant recreation, and travel in the new colony was very difficult, especially

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<sup>1</sup> Pakeha refers to people of British and European origin or descent in New Zealand. Normally it refers to such people who live permanently in New Zealand, but in this chapter it is used for all such people in New Zealand to avoid confusion with Europeans in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> P H Hansen "British Mountaineering, 1850-1914" PhD thesis History Harvard 1991

into the mountains. Furthermore, alpine climbing only developed as a recreation for the English between 1840 and 1865. It was difficult for this 'sport' to be taken to the other side of the world before it had been formalised and codified to create a transferable package. Aspects of culture which went to make up British climbing might be transferred as part of early settlement, but they were not sufficient in themselves to instigate recreational climbing in the colony.

The years before 1880 saw considerable growth and development of Pakeha society in New Zealand. Through a focus on exploration for routes and resources, and on defining and appropriating the land for themselves, Pakeha became increasingly aware of the mountains and more knowledgeable about them. The mountain region was located on an edge of society which moved as 'civilisation' was extended, and as routes and peaks became more specifically identified and defined. As settlement expanded, urbanisation became a feature of New Zealand society, and while much recreation developed within the town setting, some people began to look further afield for adventure. A few people reached glaciers and summits, but the activity was little more than energetic walking. The techniques and equipment of alpine climbing did not reach New Zealand as part of colonial migration and the concept of mountain visits for enjoyment developed only slowly. Recreational climbing itself, as practised in Europe by the English, was eventually brought to New Zealand by visitors in 1882. By then the new colony was much more settled and established, and attitudes to the mountains were beginning to make adventurous and distant recreation possible, and even desirable, for the settlers.

## CLIMBING IN ENGLISH CULTURE

The practices and traditions of nearly a hundred years of climbing in Europe could be brought to New Zealand in 1882 for modern mountain climbing had begun with climbs of Mont Blanc from 1786. This peak, like most others in Europe, was visible and reasonably accessible from existing villages. Though some ascents were undertaken largely for scientific reasons, as part of more extensive study of mountains and glaciers, the summit of Mont Blanc soon became an acceptable aim for visitors to the French and Swiss glaciers. An arduous rather than difficult feat, this ascent became a new form of tourist experience, involving strenuous physical activity in the mountains as well as views of them. From the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 more and more English people travelled on the Continent, and there was a great increase in publicity about what to see and do.<sup>3</sup> The gradual development of the native mountain dwellers, often chamois hunters, into mountain guides for the travellers delineated two types of climbers. The more affluent visitors, often English, paid others to take them up Mont Blanc and the poorer locals gained a new livelihood by leading the travellers to their climbing objective. However, such was the concentration on climbing just the one mountain as a tourist feat, that by 1840 its ascent was no longer seen as particularly difficult or adventurous. This loss of appeal helped lead to consideration of other peaks and the wider development of recreational climbing.

By 1840 scientific knowledge of the mountains was beginning to contribute to the growth of climbing as a sport. Scientific curiosity had developed from the Renaissance, and more specific knowledge, which grew rapidly from the seventeenth century, helped alleviate fears of monsters in mountainous regions. So the mountains had become more generally noticed and acceptable in educated Europe during the eighteenth century. The greatest impact of science on the establishment of mountaineering came in the first half of the nineteenth

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<sup>3</sup> J Buzard *The Benten Track* Oxford 1993 p1-91

century with the development of glaciology. Studying glaciers required that considerable time be spent in the mountains, something middle and upper class people had seldom done before. Time and study brought familiarity and the acquisition of some basic skills on snow and ice. The acquisition and dissemination of mountain knowledge and skills among educated people helped lead towards climbing, though scientists would not usually admit they climbed for reasons other than scientific ones.<sup>4</sup>

The Romantic movement of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also helped alter views of the mountains.

The change in human attitudes about mountains involved a reversal of many basic attitudes. What men see in Nature is a result of what they have been taught to see - lessons they have learned in school, doctrines they have heard in church, books they have read. They are conditioned most of all by what they mean by *Nature*...Human response to mountains has been...motivated by man's conception of the world which he inhabits. Before the "Mountain Glory" could shine, men were forced to change radically their ideas of the structure of the earth on which they lived and the structure of the universe of which that earth is only a part. Theology, philosophy, geology, astronomy - basic and radical changes in all these occurred before the "Mountain Gloom" gave way to "Mountain Glory".<sup>5</sup>

In combination with such developments in scholarship, Romantic artists and writers, especially poets such as Wordsworth and Shelley, came to see Nature as something to be empathised with and admired for its beauty, not feared for its unknowns. Where previously there had been disorder, brute force, and nightmarish weather and landscapes, now there was seen the hand of God, infinite, eternal, and creating its own order for artists to admire and scientists to understand. The growth of industrialisation, particularly in England, also meant the natural world offered an appeal and impressiveness not found in man's creations. In contrast to urban society, the natural world seemed to offer, in its relative lack of tameness, a pleasing novelty. This change in attitude

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<sup>4</sup> R Clark *The Victorian Mountaineers* London 1953 p19-21,91-109

<sup>5</sup> M H Nicolson *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* New York 1959 p3

towards the mountains was crucial to the development of alpine climbing, because it allowed people to discover what high mountains were like through experiencing them first hand.

There was another development in England at about the same time as the Romantic movement which contributed a little to mountain climbing. This was pedestrianism, walking, not just as a means of travel, which it had always been, but as a recreation and sport. "Pedestrianism, chiefly in the form of long distance walks for wagers, had become a popular sport" in England in the second half of the eighteenth century. The practice continued to be popular in the nineteenth century, being seen as "valuable training in stamina and determination", both qualities needed in the new sport of mountain climbing.<sup>6</sup> It was a considerable step from walks where the achievement was in the distance, and in the speed at which distance was covered, to walks where the achievement was in the height reached, and the latter involved no economic motivation. However the move away from 'civilisation' required by climbing was also to be found in some recreational walking and rambling.

In the mid-nineteenth century John Ruskin, who was so influential as an art critic and writer, propounded a different Romantic perception of mountains. He held that they were not only beautiful, but were temples, "cathedrals of the earth",<sup>7</sup> and as such were not to be entered or climbed, because that activity would be profane. They might be admired, and should be worshipped, but only from a distance. Some descriptions of New Zealand mountains in the later nineteenth century, as Pakeha discovered the beauty and impressiveness of the Southern Alps, echoed this hallowed tone. Ruskin's much publicised view helped bring people in Britain to appreciate the beauty of mountain scenery, and encouraged travellers into alpine regions. However, to the hundreds of people, virtually all males, who took up climbing in the European Alps in the

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<sup>6</sup> T G Brown & G de Beer *The First Ascent of Mont Blanc* London 1957 p11

<sup>7</sup> C E Engel *Mountaineering in the Alps* London 1971 p101; see also Clark *Victorian* p30-40

mid-nineteenth century, this interpretation of the mountains was largely irrelevant because it was essentially passive. Middle class recreationalists could see the mountains as holy places and sometimes found a spiritual essence, but primarily they sought adventure in climbs to the summits.

Photography supported both Ruskin's view of the mountains, and the more practical purposes of the developing climbers. This new technique of reproduction, employed in the European Alps before 1850, contributed significantly to wider knowledge of mountains. Ruskin himself was one of the first to use the process at the same time as a number of Europeans.<sup>8</sup>

Photographs could show the impressiveness of the alpine world, though they lacked the exaggeration so common in paintings and drawings of mountains. The exhibition of mountain photographs and the lithographing of them for greater distribution, served as both description and advertisement. Such publicity, by acquainting people with a visual impression of what they might visit, also brought the mountain region closer to 'civilisation' and appropriated it for that world.

More important to the English who took up climbing in the middle of the nineteenth century were changing attitudes to physical exercise and recreation for men. The idea of sport was broadening in terms of both activity and participation, and for the middle class, whose work seemed to be increasingly sedentary and whose ideals were gentlemanly, two concepts grew in importance. The cult of athleticism was becoming a considerable force in the education of the middle-class,<sup>9</sup> and the ideal of 'Muscular Christianity' supported what was regarded as manly physical exercise for a growing

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<sup>8</sup> Engel p103; K Lukan (ed) *The Alps and Alpinism* London 1968 p168

<sup>9</sup> J A Mangan *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* Cambridge 1981 p1-9,18-25,55-6,68-70,99-102,114-21. B Haley *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* Cambridge Mass. 1978 p171-9 notes opposition to athleticism as does Mangan p123.

number of scholars, businessmen and other professionals.<sup>10</sup> A healthy mind could best be developed in a healthy body in pleasant, beautiful or impressive natural surroundings created by God. For the well-off middle class males whose ideas these were, such a context was available in the mountains. These people could afford to travel to alpine regions, and the railways of mid-nineteenth century Europe enabled them to do so more easily. Through climbing they could create new definitions of gentility and masculinity which gave them a more assured place in their world.<sup>11</sup>

Climbing also served as imperial 'conquest'. Like other travellers,<sup>12</sup> climbers came to see it as normal and natural to want to get to the 'ends of the earth', which for them were the summits of mountains, as a part of imperialistic exploration throughout the world. Psychologically British imperialism brought distant places within reach. As the nineteenth century passed, in a sense there was nothing foreign to the British, and so some could explore and hunt in Africa or Asia, while others could appropriate the European Alps to their own uses.<sup>13</sup> The widespread diffusion of travel literature among the middle classes, especially from the middle of the century, included books and lectures on climbs and mountains. The journalist Albert Smith climbed Mont Blanc in 1851 and subsequently entertained many thousands, including royalty, with his

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<sup>10</sup> Haley p23-70,107-19,125,141-4,157,161-8,206-9,220-9; J A Mangan & J Walvin eds *Manliness and Morality* Manchester 1987 p1-74; R Higgs "Muscular Christianity, Holy Play, and Spiritual Exercises" in S Hoffman ed *Sport and Religion* Champaign Illinois 1992 p89-103

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of many of the above factors see P Hansen "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain" *Journal of British Studies* July 1995 p301-4

<sup>12</sup> Travel to more distant places, for health, aesthetic or exploratory reasons, became a way of life for a number of people in the nineteenth century, including women (A Allen *Travelling Ladies* London 1980) and sometimes to New Zealand, for example Dumont D'Urville 1824 & 1827, Augustus Earle 1827-8, the *Beagle* with Charles Darwin 1835, George French Angas 1844.

<sup>13</sup> J MacKenzie "The imperial pioneer and hunter..." in Mangan & Walvin p176-94; J MacKenzie *The Empire of Nature* Manchester 1988; J A Mangan ed *Making Imperial Mentalities* Manchester 1990 p1-20; J A Mangan ed *The Cultural Bond Sport, Empire, Society* London 1992 p1-9



presentation of the ascent and a popular book, *The Story of Mont Blanc*.<sup>14</sup> For some this vicarious experience was the closest they got to actual climbing; for others this was the beginning of a new and exciting recreation.

Mountaineering, as one historian has put it, "admirably suited bourgeois sporting requirements, with its undoubted healthiness, its strenuous physical exertion, its proper sting of danger to try the moral fibre - and its exclusiveness."<sup>15</sup> The early middle-class climbers usually had sedentary jobs as lawyers, dons, clergymen, merchants, civil servants and bankers.<sup>16</sup> They were also athletes who found they enjoyed this form of exercise, and the mental and physical fitness they achieved. They revelled in a seemingly pure environment, and in the beauty of the mountains in their variety of moods. There was enjoyment of adverse weather and primitive living, for a time, and stimulation in the challenge of overcoming difficulties and in the excitement of danger and risk. The virgin mountains were a new realm of discovery, and an arena for conquest. Climbers found and enjoyed adventure, and returned to their offices, studies and clubs refreshed. As a modern recreation, mountain climbing dates from this new perception of the European Alps by male members of the British upper middle-class in the 1840s and 1850s. People from Europe as well as from Britain were involved, but the English were most prominent, and it was their adoption of climbing which later had impact in New Zealand. The activity was such that by 1880 virtually all major European peaks had been ascended. In the

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<sup>14</sup> Clark *Victorian* p49-56; Engel p99-101; Hansen "Albert Smith" p304-9. *The Story of Mont Blanc* was first published 1853 and other editions followed.

<sup>15</sup> D Brailsford *British Sport A Social History* Cambridge 1992 p92

<sup>16</sup> Clark *Victorian* p15-121; G T Stewart "Whymper of the Matterhorn: A Victorian Tragedy" *History Today* Vol 33 Feb 1983 p10 analyses the composition of the Alpine Club 1857-1863; Hansen "British Mountaineering" p112-8

process the climbers did much to create a body of mountain guides<sup>17</sup> and together climbers and guides developed climbing techniques<sup>18</sup> and specialist equipment such as the ice axe.<sup>19</sup>

The founding of climbing clubs was a natural development for the many practitioners of the recreation, and, in England, a clear statement of the exclusiveness of the activity. The Alpine Club in London was the first in 1857. It sought to bring together climbers for fellowship and exchange of information, but it also restricted to 'gentlemen' those who might be regarded as climbers. This was initially more a gentlemen's club than a sporting club, but it was focused on climbing, a new athletic pursuit. In the Alpine Club, not only was information exchanged and recorded, but, as in other sporting clubs, practices were standardised, so that there grew up a body of self-developed and self-imposed rules and mores for mountain climbers. This codification of the recreation to some extent set limits on what was a new and developing activity, but it also created a more exportable and specific recreation.

One of the restrictions of the club was the clear distinction made by the British between 'amateurs' and 'professionals' in climbing. Similar differences existed in other sports, particularly in cricket and rowing.<sup>20</sup> The amateurs were the ones who climbed or batted or rowed for enjoyment in their leisure time, mostly British upper middle-class males. They were the gentleman and the Alpine Club was for them, the employers of the 'professionals'. In cricket working-class people might be employed for the plebeian task of bowling and later were paid to play the game, while in rowing the professionals were those

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<sup>17</sup> R Clark *The Early Alpine Guides* London 1949

<sup>18</sup> These included interesting uses of the rope. Guides might hold the rope by hand, or unrope from clients at dangerous times. Climbers might fasten the rope to their belts - AJ 1865 p96; Engel p129

<sup>19</sup> Lukan p46; Engel p113,161

<sup>20</sup> E Halladay "Of Pride and Prejudice: The Amateur Question in English Nineteenth-Century Rowing" in *IJHS* 4:1 May 1987 p39-53; R Holt *Sport and the British* Oxford 1989 p4-5,75-134; A Guttmann *From Ritual to Record* New York 1978 p30-2

who earned a living through a labouring job, especially as paid watermen. In climbing the professionals were the guides and porters, usually natives of the area where the climbing occurred. The British middle-class, seeing a wider world to be exploited in many different ways, assumed that the natives should assist in the process of conquest. Guides and porters were employed to do the load-carrying and step-cutting, and often to do the leading and route-finding. They climbed because they were paid to do so. Since they wished to minimise risks, they tended to be conservative in their climbing and only the very skilled guides preferred the unknown to the known. They might enjoy their work in the mountains, but it was the employment which gave them opportunity and reason to climb and determined their interaction with the mountains. If a guide and a client climbed together season after season, the relationship might become more of a partnership, but class, racial and national differences always remained.<sup>21</sup>

Similar distinctions were visible in the competitive element, which existed from the beginning in climbing and contributed to expansion of the 'sport'. There were rivalries between climbers and between guides. As climbers of other countries sought to emulate the British, nationalistic feelings became part of this competition. The circumstances of the first ascent of the Matterhorn brought personal, class, and national rivalries into the public notice,<sup>22</sup> making climbing part of the emerging world-wide nationalism and imperialism. Much of the competition was over new climbs. With first ascents of most European peaks completed, climbers by 1880 were beginning to expand their horizons in four ways. Climbers looked to new routes, that is, new ways of climbing known mountains. New techniques evolved, especially for rock climbing, though the British tended to frown on these. There was also more guideless climbing, where the amateurs, often highly skilled, climbed in partnership unaided and in some senses unlimited by the conservative views and practices

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<sup>21</sup> Clark *Guides* passim

<sup>22</sup> E Whymper *Scrambles Amongst the Alps* 1871, London 1936 p299-343

of many guides. For the British this too was not a commonly accepted way of climbing. As mountains in the Alps were ascended, and traditional climbing areas seemed to become too crowded, there was a fourth major climbing development. Europe was expanding further into the wider world and transport systems were being established to maintain empire. So climbers looked for their recreation, challenge and appropriation to a wider frontier, to mountains further afield - the Caucasus, the Andes, the Himalayas, and even New Zealand. Only then was mountain climbing, a specific aspect of British culture, brought to New Zealand.

## THE NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN EXPERIENCE

While New Zealand climbing grew from the British tradition after 1880, there were before that time a number of local considerations which both limited and encouraged mountain activity. Interaction between Pakeha and the New Zealand mountains was determined by the nature of the terrain, the attitudes of Maori to the environment, certain aspects of British culture brought to the colony, and the version of 'civilisation' developed by the Pakeha population. The New Zealand situation helped shape not only the new settler society, but also its attitudes towards the mountains, and intrusions into them.

Maori had already appropriated the resources and landscape of New Zealand in their own ways and for their own purposes. They did not so much occupy the land as they lived in and with the natural world, at just above subsistence level. They believed the human and natural worlds were one, and thus there was no Maori concept of conquering the land. There was also little purpose for them in ascending the heights above the bushline, and they would have found the practicalities of such journeying difficult. Maori traditions tell of ascents of peaks such as Ngauruhoe and Taranaki and they were accustomed to moving

through the mountains in both the North and South Islands.<sup>23</sup> However, travel in snow could have been only for limited periods, and for specific purposes, such as a desire for refuge, or traversing the Southern Alps to trade greenstone.

A number of hills and mountains, particularly in the North Island where the density of population lay, were embodied in Maori stories and traditions, and were personified and personalised to become part of the life of the tribe, past and present. These stories about mountains with human characteristics, particularly the way they moved around the landscape, helped Maori explain how the land came to be as it was. A mountain in the area of a particular tribe came to represent the spirit of that tribe, and gave it considerable mana (power, status). The traditions integrated the mountain, part of the natural world, with the human world. So such mountains came to be tapu (sacred), and their mana and identity with their people prevented climbing to their tops. By the time Pakeha came to New Zealand many North Island mountains accessible to Maori were specially tapu because of their links with tribes long settled near them. Even though it was possible for Maori to climb all of the North Island mountains, it was forbidden as well as to little purpose. Permanent Maori settlement in the South Island was more scattered and usually further from high mountains, though prominent peaks were known and named. Maori could have ascended foothills and lower summits, but not any of the major, higher ones because of the permanent snow and ice.

There was considerable contrast between Maori and Pakeha perceptions of the natural world, and sometimes this led to conflict. Both tapu and traditions indicate that mountains were significant and important to Maori, but there was no need to get to their summits, and Maori custom had determined that many of the accessible ones were forbidden. For Europeans Nature was something distinct from the human world, not part of it. This separation allowed the

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<sup>23</sup> J Cowan *The Tongariro National Park* Wellington 1927 p25-7; J Te H Grace *Tiwharetoa* 1959, Auckland 1992 p62-5, 506-8; A B Scanlan *Egmont The Story of a Mountain* Wellington 1961 p39-40; B Brailsford *Greenstone Trails* Wellington 1984

natural world to be feared or admired, as well as conquered and exploited, and any of these practices and attitudes might require the landscape to be appropriated, used, dominated or changed. New Zealand was all the more attractive to English settlers, coming from an over-urbanised society with all its attendant ills, because it was apparently 'virgin' territory, ripe for discovery and exploitation. Both Maori and European perceptions of the mountains existed in the settlement period after 1840. Up to the 1850s Maori were in many ways dominant in New Zealand, and they might prevent intrusion onto the mountains and limit European possession of the landscape. This was especially so in the central North Island where the volcanoes which attracted travellers were tapu to the many Maori who lived nearby. The closing off of this area after the New Zealand wars of the 1860s further restricted Pakeha interaction with those mountains.

Pakeha sought to explore and discover all aspects of the new land, including the mountain country, but different attitudes to the landscape determined relationships and interactions between people and the natural world. For much of the nineteenth century settlers held two different views of the mountains. In general terms these perceptions were positive and negative, though both could lead to a desire to define and possess the landscape, including the mountain region. Eventually the mountain landscape was perceived in favourable terms, but among new settlers especially, indifference and dislike were common because of the difficulties found in the terrain. Most European settlers in New Zealand were pragmatic pioneers, concerned firstly to survive in the new country, and then to better themselves in material ways. For settlers who sought a better and easier life in their new country, the apparent wildness of the natural world could be disturbing. Mountains and the bush were perceived as problems because they were barriers and obstacles. Most settlers wished to exploit some easily accessible and usable resource in the new country. Apart from a little gold, such resources did not exist in the New Zealand mountains. Bush and mountains were ignored, at least initially, because they were not

suitable for grazing or cultivation. They also prevented potential farmers, or their usual predecessors the explorers, from easily discovering what land was available for settlement.

Unlike some visitors, settlers did not come to New Zealand for its recreational possibilities. Pioneering was usually hard work and there was little opportunity for leisure. A number of settlers, for a time, lived an outdoor life, close to nature, and some explored into the mountain regions. Yet it was not rural life which produced climbers. Those who were climbing in Europe were the urban, educated, upper middle-class with money to afford periods in the Alps, and with time to climb as well. Such people were not a great proportion of the new Pakeha population in New Zealand, and were likely to be occupied by their own concerns and, as natural leaders, with public duties. As the colony became more established, there were issues of government, both national and local, and the New Zealand wars, to occupy people, as well as the gold rushes and the establishment of businesses which gold and the development of pastoralism led to. Colonial New Zealand was in many ways a practical society, first concerned with survival, next with doing well materially, and then with re-creating as much of the homeland and its culture as possible. Poorer people could only afford leisure activity close to home, and when the more affluent did find time for recreational pursuits, they seldom looked to the mountains. They took up outdoor pursuits, such as hunting or fishing, and later team sports, but these were shorter term activities closer at hand.

A prime objective of European settlement was to bring 'civilisation' to New Zealand. Settlers came to New Zealand to establish a society similar to the one they had come from. The adventure to be had in reaching or living in New Zealand involved sufficient risk for most settlers. While greater freedom was often sought, the unknown could not be easily accepted or enjoyed.

'Europeanisation' of the landscape, a taming and ordering process, was an important part of settlement, but this took time. Defining and depicting the natural world through exploration, mapping, picturing and describing was a

first step. The application of imported systems and the distribution of known plants and animals then made the landscape all the more familiar. However, this process was more difficult with the mountains which, for most people, remained on the periphery of the 'civilised' world.

However, there was also a favourable attitude towards the mountains, and this view became more general as familiarity with the natural world increased. Even before formal settlement from 1840 there was interaction between Pakeha and the mountain world in New Zealand. Though this seldom took the form of climbing to summits, different perceptions, attitudes and desires did link the 'civilised' and natural worlds. All forms of European exploration, travel and settlement helped include the mountains in the knowledge of 'civilised' society. A search for adventure on the part of individuals led to the acquisition of more knowledge, familiarity and acceptance of the mountains. A desire for scientific study of the new land, firmly entrenched in Britain and Europe, was also of practical assistance to the new colony. Other aspects of British culture, such as Romantic attitudes, contributed to this changing view of the more remote and difficult landscape in New Zealand. The strong English tradition of Romanticism, especially in art and literature, did not at first seem applicable to the New Zealand landscape and thus did not initially link the new society to its natural world. Explorers might find the landscape impressive, but it was more difficult for the ordinary settler, focused on making a living, to accept the mountains or see them as beautiful, until basic exploration had been done and knowledge about the new country acquired. Once settlers came to terms with the terrain and felt at home in it they could view it more favourably. Perhaps ironically, this began to occur as the greater stability and security of increasing urbanisation in the 1860s and 1870s made a clearer distinction between the 'civilised' and natural worlds.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Pakeha population: 1860 - 79,711; 1880 - 484,864. Approximately a third of the latter population lived in cities or larger towns, and this proportion was growing. *New Zealand Official Year-Book 1900* p 91-101



A considerable scientific background and determination to examine the natural world was brought to New Zealand by many different explorers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There was recognition from the time of James Cook that a scientific study of the new land, its flora and fauna, the Maori, its topography and later its geology, was essential to Pakeha appropriation and settlement. Apart from the enjoyment or profit which might ensue, New Zealand just had to be explored if it was to be possessed by Europeans. However, there was so much that was new that the mountains were not a focus of study till the late 1850s. The first applications of science to the mountain region were practical: to survey the land for routes or exploitable resources, and to name and map it to formalise possession. From the 1860s a main concern was to establish whether there were any gold-bearing geological structures. Explorers and surveyors climbed a number of high points for the information the view might provide. Some of these ascents were also recreational in nature because the summit achievement was a primary aim, but there was little use of any of the techniques or equipment of alpine climbing before 1880. Exploration and surveying did not lead directly to alpine climbing though they served as important background, linking society and the alpine region. Before mountains could be ascended they had to be located. Some stood out, and had obvious approaches. Others were neither to be seen nor routes to them found for many years.

Discovery also brought more confident attitudes, and by the 1860s and 1870s there was some recognition of the scenic value of the New Zealand mountains which began to encourage people to visit them. Interaction with the mountain world by explorers, surveyors and scientists began to be overlaid by a somewhat different type of interaction through the activity of travellers or tourists. All were explorers and adventurers at a personal level but the circumstances and motivations were changing. The new purpose was essentially passive, to admire the mountains from afar. However, visitors might also be active 'discoverers' since there was much in the mountain region that was unfamiliar in terms of vegetation and geology, especially the glaciers. By

the 1880s various parts of New Zealand were being publicised as desirable places to visit, and two alpine areas of the South Island were included: Lake Wakatipu for its lake and mountain scenery, and the Mt Cook area for its glaciers and peaks.

Few could afford the expense and time it took to get into the mountain region, and travelling in the back country was not usually done for enjoyment. Life was uncomfortable enough without seeking out hardship. Many of the growing number of tourists in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century were outsiders, world travellers, but there were also more and more from the steadily growing, more affluent, middle-class of the developing New Zealand towns. Urbanisation brought some of the ills that existed in migrants' original societies, such as poor hygiene and health, crowding, and long hours of work for little pay. These ills, together with the Romantic view that Nature was beautiful and good, suggested to the middle-class that the natural world was purer and healthier, and thus a legitimate place to visit. This attraction complemented the desire to appropriate the landscape, to 'conquer' it and subject it to Pakeha 'civilisation'. In attempting to do all these things, and experience a little self-chosen adventure, the developing New Zealand society forged stronger links with its mountain frontier and began to modify that region at the same time.

These early links between the 'civilised' and natural worlds were made in both the North and South Islands, but there were differences between the two. There were many more South Island mountains and they were higher than in the North, including the highest in New Zealand, Mt Cook, at 12349ft. These mountains were impressive and challenging, and with a snow level down to 7000ft even in summer, they were alpine in nature year round. They were not easy to climb, and so required special skills and equipment. The South Island mountains thus required people to make an actual choice of a more difficult mountain activity than just walking uphill which, in summer, could achieve the summits of all North Island mountains. The settler experiences in the two

islands also differed. Pakeha settlement, especially the development of towns, occurred more rapidly in the South Island than in the North in the 1860s and 1870s. There were fewer Maori, no wars, and considerable economic and social progress, thanks to gold and pastoralism. A significant part of the development of southern society was the rapid growth of transport and communication routes, road and rail, between settlements and towards the mountains. The more open country on the eastern side of the South Island facilitated this, whereas in the North the rugged country, the bush, and Maori attitudes limited such development, especially towards the central volcanic peaks.

Throughout the period of Pakeha settlement up to about 1880 there was interaction between the natural world and individuals from the 'civilised' world whose cumulative experience created a knowledge of the mountain regions on which alpine climbing could later be based. However, not all those men who explored back country New Zealand left records of where they went. For the future of mountain climbing, recording, mapping and photographing of exploration routes, and of mountains, were to be most important. Until a mountain was known, it would not be climbed. Exploration also needed to be recorded in print, so that it would become internalised by the wider society. Then the activity could be repeated and extended, and routes for travel established. At an intellectual level, such processes of delineation were important to bring the landscape within human structures and mastery.

There was sufficient recording of mountains, routes, and experiences before 1880 for the mountain regions to become familiar to those who were interested in them. Some of the people creating this record were practical men, out to do a job, and uninterested in any mountain aesthetic or recreation. Others were the more educated and potentially, if not always actually, the better-off in society. They might be similar to those who were mountain climbing in Europe, but they were not so urbanised, nor so confined to study or office. They explored into the mountains but they showed little inclination to climb. The essential prerequisite, still absent, was that there be some desire to reach more difficult

summits for little more purpose than the achievement of reaching those summits. In the 1860s and 1870s, when English climbing in Europe was at its busiest and most productive, there was no such 'sport' in New Zealand, and little sign that society might legitimate such a leisure pursuit.

The New Zealand context of exploration and settlement was essentially pragmatic, and so was much of the contact between Europeans and the mountains. The development of society allowed for both individual and group-sponsored movement into the mountains but this activity, though adventurous, was largely non-recreational. Explorers, surveyors and scientists were seeking resources to exploit and routes through the mountains. Also with a practical purpose, others came to the mountains seeking to make a living, especially gold-seekers and enterprising settlers looking for land for sheep. Some of these many different types of explorers noted the aesthetic attractions of the mountains they explored, but generally they concentrated on the practical details applicable to development of the new colony. However, throughout this period a willingness for adventure also meant that more recreational aspects came to the fore in some of the mountain activity which occurred. In the South Island the practical men dominated the official record, and prepared the knowledge on which climbing could later be based, but throughout New Zealand people who were more simply daring and curious introduced aspects of 'sport' which were later to help create recreational climbing.

The mountains were a considerable part of the New Zealand landscape, but they were essentially unproductive, and settlers and visitors focused on future wealth in agricultural and pastoral land could not approve of that facet of the topography. Alexander Marjoribanks acknowledged the mountains in a book published in 1847, but his ironic view was a typical settler one:

It appears to be a singular sort of paradise...-unlike what mankind in general look forward to,-being composed chiefly of mountains, hills, ranges of mountains, ridges of mountains, tops of mountains, snowy mountains, creeks, bays, lagoons, and mangrove swamps.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> A Marjoribanks *Travels in New Zealand* London 1847, reprint Christchurch 1973 p167

A few years later Samuel Butler provided a greater complexity of perceptions of the New Zealand mountains, but he too concluded that practical uselessness was their dominant feature. Butler was a settler whose English background was middle-class intellectual, artistic and physically energetic,<sup>26</sup> similar to those who were then taking up recreational climbing in Europe. He arrived in Canterbury early in 1860 "to find sheep country and make his fortune."<sup>27</sup> After a seven hour scramble to a summit of the Two Thumbs Range near the head of the Rangitata River in April 1860 while looking for sheep country, Butler and his companion gained a view of Mt Cook.

Suddenly, as my eyes got on a level with the top, so that I could see over, I was struck almost breathless by the wonderful mountain that burst on my sight. The effect was startling. It rose towering in a massy parallelogram, disclosed from top to bottom in the cloudless sky, far above all the others...indeed a splendid spectacle...Mont Blanc himself is not so grand in shape, and does not look so imposing. Indeed, I am not sure that Mount Cook is not the finest in outline of all the snowy mountains that I have ever seen...It is...well worth any amount of climbing to see. No one can mistake it. If a person says he *thinks* he has seen Mount Cook, you may be quite sure that he has not seen it. The moment it comes into sight the exclamation is, 'That is Mount Cook!' -not 'That *must* be Mount Cook!' There is no possibility of mistake.<sup>28</sup>

Butler expressed the enthusiasm of a Romantic for natural scenery. Comparison with overseas peaks and sights was to become common later, but here Butler was not trying to interest people overseas - he was genuinely impressed. He went further than consideration of the view, to suggest the possibility of the mountain being climbed. He was the first to put forward this idea, writing:

There is a glorious field for the members of the Alpine Club here. Mount Cook awaits them, and he who first scales it will be crowned with undying laurels: for my part, though it is hazardous to say this of any mountain, I do not think that any human being will ever reach its top.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> R Robinson "Samuel Butler: Exploration and Imagination" in L Richardson & W D McIntyre eds *Provincial Perspectives* Christchurch 1980 p64-5

<sup>27</sup> *ibid* p61

<sup>28</sup> S Butler *A First Year in Canterbury Settlement* Auckland 1964 p62-3

<sup>29</sup> *ibid* p63

At a time when mountain climbing was developing rapidly in Europe, and only three years after the founding of the Alpine Club in England, Butler could see possibilities of achievement and appropriation for members of that club on the other side of the world. However, Butler was also very aware that admiring mountains, or thinking of climbing, was not a suitable attitude for the new colony, and these Romantic and mountain climbing views were very soon displaced. He wrote:

I am forgetting myself into admiring a mountain which is of no use for sheep. This is wrong. A mountain here is only beautiful if it has good grass on it. Scenery is not scenery - it is 'country', *subaudita voce* 'sheep'. If it is good for sheep, it is beautiful, magnificent, and all the rest of it; if not, it is not worth looking at. I am cultivating this tone of mind with considerable success, but you must pardon me for an occasional outbreak of the old Adam.<sup>30</sup>

Butler was mocking both himself and the prevailing pragmatic attitude, but he was also aware of the validity of the latter. Admiring the mountains for their magnificence, let alone thinking of climbing them, was irrelevant and impractical in a settler society bent on wresting a living from arable or pastoral land. Butler could understand this, for there was a practical streak in him too. He came to New Zealand to make money and did so by grazing sheep in remote valleys and on the foothills of the mountains, and profiting when he sold his sheep station. He understood that pioneering was hard work, and accepted that people went to New Zealand to better themselves. But he could, unlike many settlers, see that there were other possible perceptions of the mountains.

Explorers were just as practical as people like Marjoribanks and Butler, but they sought information for the benefit of the whole of society and they made more specific links between the 'civilised' and mountain worlds. Not directed by the profit motive, their discoveries in the mountain region helped make this frontier zone more familiar and less fearsome. Sometimes the official surveyors and explorers followed gold-seekers and pastoralists; at other times, they were the pioneers. Explorers Charles Heaphy and Thomas Brunner, at the Arahura

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<sup>30</sup> Butler p63

river in Westland in May 1846, were the first to record a sighting of a great peak, "Te Hauraki", probably a misunderstanding of the southern Maori name Aoraki. The Pakeha name for the same mountain, Mt Cook, and the prominence that went with it being the highest peak in New Zealand, was not given until March 1851 when Captain Stokes of the *Acheron* sighted a "stupendous mountain" and named it after his predecessor Captain James Cook.<sup>31</sup> However, investigation of the central Southern Alps did not begin till after the sheep stealer James MacKenzie<sup>32</sup> had revealed, in about 1854, the area of South Canterbury beyond Burke's and MacKenzie's Passes. Shepherd's were probably the first visitors to the Mt Cook area<sup>33</sup> but it was subsequent scientific interests in mapping, geology and glaciology which explored the district and brought its mountains to the acquaintance of a wider public.

Like Butler, practical explorers were not immune to the beauty and impressiveness of the South Island mountains. Surveyor John Thomson reached a summit between the Lindis Pass and the Clutha river on 18 December 1857 and such was the magnificence of the panorama that he renamed the peak Mt Grandview.<sup>34</sup> One of the visible peaks resembled the Matterhorn and Thomson named this "glorious pyramid of ice and snow" Mount Aspiring.<sup>35</sup> However, a few days later, when he made the first recorded visit to the Mt Cook region at the head of Lake Pukaki, Thomson was much less enthusiastic about the mountains closer at hand. He admired Mt Cook but not its surroundings. His naming of physical features was more prosaic than further south, and he clearly did not feel it was his job to encourage visitors to the area.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> J Wilson *Aorangi* Christchurch 1968 p40-2; S Natusch *The Cruise of the Acheron* Christchurch 1978 p160

<sup>32</sup> DNZB Vol 1 Wellington 1990 p253-4

<sup>33</sup> J Wilson p50

<sup>34</sup> J Hall-Jones *Mr Surveyor Thomson* Wellington 1971 p73-4

<sup>35</sup> W S Gilkison *Aspiring* Dunedin 1951 p14. Thomson's great-grandson, J Hall-Jones, has a more prosaic version in *Mr Surveyor Thomson* p74.

<sup>36</sup> Hall-Jones *Thomson* p77-8

Other official explorers did much more to increase interaction between the wider society and the mountain region. The exploration, surveying, mapping, photography and scientific study of the Mt Cook area by Julius Haast and Edward Sealy in the 1860s was an important example of how the personal experience of explorers might have an impact on their society. Their knowledge was disseminated to others through articles, lectures and photographs, stimulating greater interest in the mountains and glaciers which led to activity foreshadowing climbing. Haast was a scientist, principally a geologist, though with wide-ranging interests, especially in botany and zoology. Sealy was a surveyor and expert photographer. Both were adventurous explorers, seeking precise information to define the land, and they made it comparatively easy for others to follow in their footsteps.<sup>37</sup>

Haast, and party, reached the Mt Cook area at the end of March 1862 and he was more enthusiastic than Thomson on first seeing Mt Cook.<sup>38</sup> Through his prolific naming of natural features, Haast also sought to take a more complete possession of the landscape than Thomson.<sup>39</sup> Haast was impressed, even excited, by the scenery of the area. Not only was he the first Pakeha to record the glaciers of the area, but he made sure they were publicised, perhaps to make up for the lack of gold which the Canterbury Provincial Government had hoped he would discover. Haast reached a reasonable height on the Mt Cook range on 12 April 1862 for topographical purposes, but he probably did not reach the 7500 feet height he recorded, or the "nearly 8,000feet" of his companion Dobson, and this cannot be construed as a first attempt to climb Mt Cook. Dobson wrote: "our business was to survey, geologise, and botanise - not

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<sup>37</sup> George Mannering, one of the first New Zealand climbers, pays tribute to them in *With Axe and Rope in the New Zealand Alps* London 1891 p133-4

<sup>38</sup> J von Haast *Geology of the Provinces of Canterbury and Westland* Christchurch 1879 p28-31

<sup>39</sup> Haast's naming honoured British and European men of science, as he sought to make a scientific name for himself.



to spend time in climbing dangerous mountain peaks."<sup>40</sup> In three visits to the same area 1867-70, Sealy had a similar practical purpose. To this end he surveyed and traversed the glaciers, once almost to the head of the Tasman Glacier.<sup>41</sup> However, the photographs he took and the maps he drew complemented Haast's writing and lectures, and together they made considerable information about this mountain region available to the increasingly urban society they came from.

Exploration by Butler, Haast, Sealy and others took possession of the landscape primarily by describing it. The purposes might be personal or official, but they were practical, for the economic benefit of self or to contribute to a wider knowledge and imperialism. However, for some New Zealand visitors and settlers, the achievement desired was different. Although they sought to discover and to 'conquer' the landscape, for them the element of adventure became paramount and the action in the mountains was of greater importance than later description of the mountains. Their exploration of the new colony was thus a more gratuitous activity, akin to recreation. Such mountain adventure could take the form of visits to alpine regions, especially the glaciers in the South Island, but it was also to be found in attempts to climb to summits in both islands.

The volcanic mountains of the North Island were an early focus for mountain adventure mixed with other ambitions for achievement of summits and exploration of the unknown. Activity was occasional rather than regular, but it was documented sufficiently to bring both the peaks and human adventures on them within the more generalised European experience. James Bidwill, a 24 year old businessman and amateur botanist from south west England, visiting New Zealand from Australia, was the first such adventurer. He reached the

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<sup>40</sup> H F von Haast *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast* Wellington 1948 p199-217; A D Dobson *Reminiscences* Christchurch 1930 p34. They must have been on the southern end of the Mt Cook range, where there is no point higher than 7000ft: map NZMS 1 S79 Mt Cook 1972.

<sup>41</sup> NZAJ 1892 p54-5; J Wilson p51

summit of Ngauruhoe, the highest peak of Tongariro, alone on 3 March 1839, in spite of Maori disapproval and tapu.<sup>42</sup> The climb was a straightforward scramble up scoria slopes, the main problems being the loose nature of the rock, sulphuric fumes and the apparent imminence of an eruption.<sup>43</sup> Bidwill enjoyed the expedition, but the latter part of the climb itself was not pleasant, and it was the ambition for a first ascent which kept him going to the very top.<sup>44</sup>

Interest in adventure on the central North Island volcanoes continued, though the tapu placed on the central mountains by the Tuwharetoa chiefs and the wars of the 1860s restricted Pakeha activity there. Ngauruhoe appealed to Pakeha because it was an active volcano with an attractive shape. It was also known to be climbable. However, most visitors, no matter how distinguished, were prevented from setting foot on the mountain.<sup>45</sup> A little to the south-west, Ruapehu was higher and more difficult to climb, but less protected by Maori. However, apart from a possible climb by Governor George Grey,<sup>46</sup> Ruapehu was not properly explored and climbed by Pakeha until the late 1870s and 1880s, well after the New Zealand wars. Society was by then more settled and the better-off were able to engage in such leisure pursuits as they chose. Then 'civilisation' could reach out to the central volcanoes on a more regular basis, establishing travel routes and finding noteworthy sights, exercise and adventure.

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<sup>42</sup> J Bidwill *Rambles in New Zealand* 1841, reprint Christchurch 1952 p69-86

<sup>43</sup> *ibid* p78

<sup>44</sup> *ibid* p77

<sup>45</sup> Among those who wished to climb were Dieffenbach 1841, Governor Grey 1850 and Ferdinand von Hochstetter 1859 - R Duncan *Early Walks in New Zealand* Wellington 1918 p111-2; Cowan *Tongariro* p28

<sup>46</sup> F von Hochstetter *New Zealand* Stuttgart 1867 p378 note 2; NZAJ 1895 p74-5; A E Esler (ed) *Tongariro National Park* Wellington 1965 p15; A D Mead *Richard Taylor: Missionary Trumper* Wellington 1966 p192-3; W P Mead *Memories of a Mountain and a River* Wanganui 1979 p48-50

Adventure and ambition were motivations for the first Pakeha ascent of Mt Egmont,<sup>47</sup> which also occurred in 1839. On either Christmas Eve or Christmas Day,<sup>48</sup> James Heberley, a 30 year old whaler, reached the summit, followed twenty minutes later by Ernest Dieffenbach, a 28 year old German doctor of medicine, now explorer, naturalist and scholar. This successful climb was a second attempt by Dieffenbach and the challenge of the summit was his main motivation. Two weeks earlier he had discovered as much as he needed for the purposes of his employer, the New Zealand Company. The second expedition was diverse in composition. Heberley was added to the party while Dick Barrett's Negro cook, "Black Lee", again accompanied Dieffenbach. These three were guided through the bush by three Maori, including a tohunga, Tangutu, and a chief, E Kake. The willingness of these Maori to act as guides is notable considering the tapu of their mountain, Taranaki. From the highest camp Tangutu and E Kake set out with Dieffenbach, Heberley and Black Lee, for the summit. The Maori went high and only stopped when the party "reached the limits of perpetual snow". Fear of tapu was one reason why the Maori chose to go no further, but their bare feet were also suffering from the cold.<sup>49</sup> On "the second lot of snow...Black Lees foot slipped and he slid down over the snow till he brought up against a rock." He must have lacked an implement for making footholds in the snow like the others. Heberley wrote: "I drove the but end of my fowling piece in the snow and draged myself up the Dr had a sharp pointed hammer and he dug holes in the snow and got up that way." Primitive technique, but practical climbing, and it got them to the summit where Heberley wished to name the peak Mount Victoria, as a tribute to the new Queen in England.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Also Mt Taranaki. This mountain will be referred to as Egmont, the name used by climbers in this period

<sup>48</sup> J Heberley MS Autobiography 1809-1843 ATL; E Dieffenbach *Travels in New Zealand* 1843, reprint Christchurch 1974 p140-61; G Bell *Ernest Dieffenbach* Palmerston North 1976 p59-61. The date of the ascent is not clear. Heberley implies it is Christmas Day; Dieffenbach has them leave on 19 December, travel for 5 days, then climb the mountain, which would be 24 December.

<sup>49</sup> Dieffenbach p155-6

<sup>50</sup> Heberley MS

Naming was an important part of European exploration and conquest, as the explorer and scientist Julius Haast later realised. The desire for naming rights expresses some personal pride in the achievement, but also makes possession clear. The greater the person the mountain is named after, the greater the mountain and the deed, and the more complete the possession. For the mountain Heberley and Dieffenbach had climbed, there were already two established names, Mt Egmont, from Cook's first voyage, and the much older Maori name, Taranaki. Furthermore, Heberley, a whaler with a German father and English mother,<sup>51</sup> did not have the status to be allowed to name the mountain, particularly as the expedition was organised and led by Dieffenbach. Just as in Europe, where the amateur employers gave their names to expeditions, and the guides were often ignored, so Dieffenbach's companion Heberley, the first Pakeha to reach the summit of the peak, has at times been given little notice or credit.

Summer ascents of Mt Egmont by a variety of people seeking adventure and achievement continued throughout the nineteenth century from the nearby Pakeha settlement of New Plymouth. Minarapa made the first Maori ascent of the mountain in European times with W Carrington and F Dillon Bell on 14 February 1848.<sup>52</sup> Soon after, on 7 March 1855, Maria Atkinson became the first Pakeha woman to reach the summit in a family party whose primary purpose was recreational. This was the first of several expeditions to the mountain by the extended Richmond-Atkinson families who were prominent in both New Plymouth and New Zealand society. They were educated, artistic and well-off people, by New Zealand standards, in some ways similar to those who were climbing in Europe. They wished to reach the top of 'their' mountain, they found the trip enjoyable, and the views were novel, but they were not quite taking up alpine climbing.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Bell p60

<sup>52</sup> Scanlan *Egmont Story* p25-6,34-6: Minarapa had been to England 1841-2

<sup>53</sup> *Taranaki Daily News* 20 Oct 1909; Scanlan *Egmont Story* p27; F Porter *Born to New Zealand* Wellington 1989 p75-6

In the South Island, a party led by Lieutenant-Governor Edward Eyre found more adventure than intended in November 1849 on Mt Tapuaenuku [Tapuae-o-Uenuku], at 9467ft the highest peak in the Kaikoura ranges.<sup>54</sup> They were supposed to be discovering a way from the Wairau to North Canterbury. Even by the standards of the day they were not equipped for climbing, and this was another reason why surveyor W Hamilton<sup>55</sup> chose not to climb. Eyre and four Maori persevered on the peak till darkness turned them back a few hundred feet from the summit. Early on the descent one of the Maori slipped and was killed in the first known New Zealand mountaineering fatality. Eyre was equipped with a sort of alpenstock, but the party seems to have had no rope or means of cutting steps in the snow. After the death of Wiremu Hoeta and other problems on the hardening snow, they spent a night out high on the mountain before descending safely the next day. For exploration there was no need to go so high, which suggests the summit was Eyre's aim. Probably this climb was a personal search for achievement and an outburst of frustrated energy. He had a public position but no power in New Zealand. In January 1849 Governor Grey had curtailed Eyre's desire to explore the North Island volcanoes, perhaps because he did not want to be upstaged by Eyre.<sup>56</sup> Neither was Grey happy with this escapade in the Kaikouras. Personal adventure had been sufficient for people like Bidwill and Dieffenbach, but more useful activity was expected of official explorers.

Most mountain adventure in the South Island followed exploration and thus was dependent on a longer process of 'civilisation' being extended into the mountains. South Island valleys could be difficult to follow and peaks often did not individually stand out until they were approached more closely, unlike Egmont and the central volcanoes of the North. South Island mountains tended

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<sup>54</sup> NZAJ 1895 p82-5; NZAJ 1946 p159-60 quotes *Wellington Independent*, presumably of 1849; J Pascoe *Land Uplifted High* Christchurch 1952 p64-5; G Dutton *The Hero as Murderer* Sydney 1967 p182-3

<sup>55</sup> See Natusch *Cruise of the Acheron* p122-3 for an outline of Hamilton's abilities and New Zealand experiences.

<sup>56</sup> Dutton p180-2; A D Mead p135

to be less accessible than the North Island volcanoes, and they were higher and more difficult to actually climb, even in summer. Mountain adventure in the South Island was initially limited to the valleys and the glaciers which were a considerable novelty. Explorers such as Haast and Sealy found and examined glaciers, but some runholders in remote valleys were also curious about the higher country. J B A Acland established himself in 1855-6 on a sheep run up the Rangitata river. It was not till May 1860 that he ventured further up "to see what the country was like amongst those big mountains."<sup>57</sup> Acland saw in the distance a glacier, though he was not able to confirm this till 1865, after Julius Haast had reached a number of glaciers in his explorations of South Canterbury rivers in 1861.<sup>58</sup> From 1865 there were expeditions combining exploration and tourism to the glaciers in the Rangitata headwaters, and some of the people involved, such as Sealy, Acland and E R Chudleigh, many years later, joined the newly formed New Zealand Alpine Club.<sup>59</sup>

Some pastoralists sought more adventure than exploring valleys and visiting glaciers and came closer to climbing. In April 1861 Laurence Kennaway and two companions ascended a peak somewhere to the north of Burke's Pass, exaggerating its height to "over eight thousand feet".<sup>60</sup> Kennaway had been running sheep in the area for three years and wished "to explore still farther back". There was a practical purpose to the ascent, but the semi-humorous way Kennaway wrote about it<sup>61</sup> indicated some perverse enjoyment of the experience. When "exhausted but victorious", they reached "the topmost crag of the range", the view, described at length, made the struggle up worthwhile.<sup>62</sup> While this ascent was little more than a long scramble, it had elements to be

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<sup>57</sup> NZAJ 1892 p22-3; L G D Acland *The Early Canterbury Runs* 4th ed Christchurch 1975 p156-57

<sup>58</sup> NZAJ 1892 p15-6

<sup>59</sup> NZAJ 1892 p7,16,25-9, 1893 p172

<sup>60</sup> L J Kennaway *Crusts A Settler's Fare Due South* 1874, reprint Christchurch 1970 p188

<sup>61</sup> The account in *Crusts* is from a letter dated May 1861.

<sup>62</sup> Kennaway p188,191-5

found in later recreational mountain climbing. Clearly there were intrinsic rewards from being adventurous. The three men were pleased with the achievement of a summit, even if the journey to it was less pleasant. The view, which included Mt Cook, rewarded them in emotional terms, as well as in a practical sense. Kennaway's personification of Mt Cook<sup>63</sup> was a Romantic feature to be found in many climbing accounts as a way of relating to the mountain by giving it a life and entity of its own. It was a sign of both respect and familiarity; an indication of the perceived might of Nature, while keeping it within the human field. Like Butler, Kennaway could relate to the mountain world at a variety of levels, but at this comparatively early date in the development of New Zealand it was not enough to lead to alpine climbing.

Of much greater impact than the isolated mountain recreation and perceptions of people like Acland, Kennaway and Butler was the publicity about the Mt Cook area generated by Haast and Sealy. In that mountain region the peaks were higher, and therefore more difficult to climb, but both they and the larger glaciers were attractive to settlers seeking some sort of mountain adventure. Those involved were the increasingly leisured and affluent people at the upper end of colonial society. They travelled adventurously, to see New Zealand's highest peak, admire the mountains generally, and to visit the glaciers. The latter were initially the principal focus, since they were novel and could provide a more immediate and personal experience than a distant high peak. Visitors who made the effort to enter the mountain region were not satisfied with sitting and looking, but scrambled onto the glaciers. The summits were out of reach, mentally and physically, but in the 1860s and 1870s the Mt Cook mountain region was becoming a zone of recreational interaction between the 'civilised' and natural worlds.

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<sup>63</sup> Kennaway p193

Following excursions by others, Governor Bowen visited the area in late January 1873.<sup>64</sup> This was his last regional visit to awaken interest in different parts of the colony. Two months later Leonard and Joanna Harper of Christchurch visited the Mt Cook glaciers<sup>65</sup> in a party organised by Melville Gray, a runholder from Ashwick on the edge of the MacKenzie Country.<sup>66</sup> The Bowen and Harper expeditions were the first notable 'tourist' visits to the glaciers and Joanna Harper the first woman. While the Bowen party was reasonably well catered for, the Gray-Harper group had to fend largely for itself in this remote area. The novelty of the camping as well as of the scenery appealed, at least for the few days they were there. There was much about both the glaciers and the mountains to interest all such visitors. They perceived beauty in the natural world and were impressed by the might of nature. The highlight was the physical activity of reaching and clambering onto the glaciers. There was also a little interest in mountaineering. One of those who accompanied both Bowen and the Harpers was George Parker who had not only visited the Mt Cook area in 1871 but may also have had some alpine experience from Europe.<sup>67</sup> There was some idea, on the part of Parker and other young males, of going up the Hooker glacier to look over what was later named Harper Saddle.<sup>68</sup> This would have been a significant climb, requiring good boots, ice axes and a rope which they lacked. They did not get very far<sup>69</sup> and there seems to have been no interest at all in climbing to the summits of lower and easier peaks.

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<sup>64</sup> *Press* 4 February 1873 p3 & *ODT* 5 February 1873 Supp p2.

<sup>65</sup> *NZAJ* 1946 p166-72; R Pinney *Early South Canterbury Runs* Wellington 1971 p83,139. Leonard Harper was a lawyer and son of the Bishop of Christchurch. The order of the Bowen and Harper visits is sometimes confused: J Wilson p51, and his source W Vance *High Endeavour* Wellington 1965 p79; P Temple *New Zealand Explorers* Christchurch 1985 p165

<sup>66</sup> Melville Gray was brother-in-law to the painter John Millais. In 1939, aged 91, Gray was to marry the daughter of another Bishop of Christchurch, Ada Julius, who climbed 1910-11 - see Chapter Five.

<sup>67</sup> Pinney *South Canterbury* p83,139; *ODT* 5 February 1873 Supp p2 mentions the climbing experience without naming Parker.

<sup>68</sup> Named after Joanna and Leonard's son Arthur who was first to reach it in 1890.

<sup>69</sup> *Mannering With Axe and Rope* p135



These visits helped give wide publicity to this specific mountain area. Just as many other aspects of New Zealand had been and were being written about and publicised for the information and attraction of people overseas, so mountains were now being added to the list through people like Bowen, Haast and Joanna Harper. Thinking in terms of conquest of the landscape rather than recreation, Bowen had earlier hoped English Alpine Club members would come to climb and in 1871 had drawn the attention of the Royal Geographical Society to the colony's mountains.<sup>70</sup> Consequent on his 1873 visit he offered assistance to any member of the AC who might come to attempt Mt Cook.<sup>71</sup> But no climbers from England came at this time and there were various reasons for this. There were still climbs, new and old, to be done in the European Alps. New Zealand was a long way to travel and other nearer mountains such as the Caucasus and the Andes were seen as more exotic and attractive. They were also higher, which mattered to some climbers. Perhaps the New Zealand wars 1860-72 had a discouraging effect. In spite of the publicity generated by the mountain visits of the 1860s and 1870s there was still not enough knowledge of the challenges and problems New Zealand could offer to climbers in spite of its lesser heights. Haast's major work, which was to have a crucial impact on the development of climbing in the 1880s, was not published till 1879.<sup>72</sup>

By then mountain tourism was also beginning to develop at Queenstown, on Lake Wakatipu. This was becoming an objective for visitors from 'civilised' society, both New Zealanders and travellers from overseas. Mountains dominated the lake and were reasonably accessible to anyone, but viewing the scenery was the main attraction before 1880. The country had been opened up by gold seekers, surveyors, explorers and sheepmen, usually by following the valleys. A few miners and shepherds undoubtedly explored well above the

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<sup>70</sup> TNZI 1871 IV May 1872 p12-3

<sup>71</sup> There is no clear source for this: *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* Vol 6 1884 p66, reprint article p10 in *Travels and History* 26, Hocken; W S Green *The High Alps of New Zealand* London 1883 p71; J Andersen *Jubilee History of South Canterbury* Christchurch 1916 p668; Vance p80

<sup>72</sup> *Geology of... Canterbury and Westland*. There had been earlier articles.

bushline to at least 6,000 feet, though a climb like that of the Government Geologist, T R Hackett, almost to the summit of the Remarkables in early October 1864, was a rarity.<sup>73</sup> Rail transport and lake steamers made the area easy to reach by the early 1880s, in two days from Christchurch or one day from Dunedin.<sup>74</sup> However, most other mountain regions in New Zealand were much less accessible for either recreationalists or tourists.

A desire for adventurous tourism was thus beginning to lead people into a variety of mountain regions, and such development was, by its very nature, also taming the mountain frontier. There was still no great degree of 'civilisation' in any of the New Zealand mountains, but as more people ventured into the mountains they slowly improved access and facilities and acquired knowledge to be shared with the wider society. By both local and world standards the New Zealand mountain regions were little known and relatively uncivilised, but in the 1860s and 1870s the foundation was laid for greater interaction between members of 'civilised' society and the mountain world. Mountain tourism in the South Island was to be most significant for the general development of climbing in New Zealand.

Yet it was in the North Island that a desire for adventurous mountain recreation led to the accomplishment of the first alpine climbing on Mt Ruapehu. Brothers Thomas and John Allison had little more than a scramble up the north-eastern spur of the mountain to reach the summit Te Heu Heu on 12 December 1877,<sup>75</sup> but subsequent adventurers began to adopt some of the equipment and practices of alpine climbing. George Beetham, a 38 year-old Wairarapa pastoralist, and Joseph Maxwell, a civil engineer, were the first Pakeha, in February 1879, to climb the high or south peak of Ruapehu, now

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<sup>73</sup> NZAJ 1946 p160, citing *Lake Wakatip Mail* 6 October 1864. Hackett may have reached over 7000ft.

<sup>74</sup> T Bracken *The New Zealand Tourist* Dunedin 1879; *Maoriland An Illustrated Handbook to NZ* Dunedin 1884; Green p294-304; R J Meyer *All Aboard* Wellington 2nd ed 1980 p33-47

<sup>75</sup> NZAJ 1895 p71-4

named Tahurangi. Beetham had attempted the mountain the year before, using a tomahawk to cut steps in the snow.<sup>76</sup> The first climb on Ruapehu by a Pakeha woman was a successful one on 9 March 1881. The party was on snow most of the day and used a rope and rough alpenstocks in rudimentary alpine climbing technique. Etheldreda Birch, with her husband William (a friend of George Beetham) and the Russell brothers, Arthur and Herbert, ascended from the north east the two highest peaks, Te Heu Heu and Tahurangi, skirting the crater lake on the way.<sup>77</sup> This was progress towards climbing but these ascents were little publicised<sup>78</sup> and did not become part of a more widespread movement towards mountain recreation. Access to these central volcanoes was not easy and much more exploration was needed.

The South Island lacked even this casual individual climbing activity, yet it was probably only a matter of time before climbing began on the high peaks there. By the end of the 1870s sufficient exploration had been done to make the mountain areas better known and thus less threatening. Society had changed considerably from the early days of European settlement. The more established nature of society was making it possible for more people to take time out from day-to-day life and to travel in leisure time. Pastoral wealth, greater urbanisation and the growth of professional classes were creating a larger affluent and educated group who, with an aesthetic interest in the landscape and an interest in athletic pursuits, might seek adventure in the mountains. They could afford to travel for recreation further afield and if they did so frequently, familiarity with the 'uncivilised' world would develop. Improved transport systems, bridges, roads and railways, and better accommodation, assisted in this process. All these changes, together with the importation of the idea of climbing from overseas, would have led to alpine climbing in New

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<sup>76</sup> (G Beetham) *The First Ascent of Mount Ruapehu, New Zealand* London 1926 p9-22

<sup>77</sup> A E Russell "Ascent of Ruapehu 1881" H Hill MS-Papers ATL. This ascent deserves greater recognition. It was both recreational and alpine, and the account indicates Mrs Birch was an important stimulus for the actual climb.

<sup>78</sup> Beetham and Maxwell did speak about their Ruapehu experiences to the Wellington Philosophical Society on 14 June 1879 - *TNZI* XII 1879 p418-20,423

Zealand. However, with only these stimuli the development of climbing as a recreation might have been a long slow process, especially in the less accessible Southern Alps. Interaction between the human and natural worlds was increasing but by 1880 Pakeha settlers in New Zealand were showing no particular interest in reaching the summits of major alpine peaks. The beginning of mountain climbing at this time required the actual presence of overseas proponents of the activity. In 1882-3 visitors from overseas provided the initiative and the example, showing New Zealanders that they could interact with the mountain frontier region in a new way, and that mountain climbing, part of British and European middle-class cultural baggage, could also be a colonial recreation.



## CHAPTER TWO

### PIONEERS BEGIN HIGH CLIMBING 1880-90

Until the 1880s New Zealand society provided a context largely unfavourable to the development of climbing in its recreational form. That decade was to witness the emergence of a new relationship between the mountain world and the wider society. Critical to this change were efforts by a more urbanised society to keep alive the pioneering ethic which included the colonial virtues of versatility, hard physical work, and a sense of adventure. At the same time significant shifts in community attitudes to the environment and to leisure pursuits were taking place. Alongside the desire to exploit and appropriate there appeared an acceptance of the natural world untouched by humans, and a wish to conserve elements of that world perceived to be under threat. A greater variety of sporting activities was also developed. One consequence of these changes was that individuals who were attracted to the mountains felt increasingly free to develop personal recreational interests in high climbing.

### STIMULUS FROM OVERSEAS

Important as this changing New Zealand society was to be as a foundation for recreational climbing, the initial impetus came from outside the colony, and especially from Britain. Visitors with climbing experience and intention were first to seek to reach the summits of high New Zealand mountains. They achieved the first alpine climbing in 1882 and 1883 and gave New Zealanders an example to follow, suggesting a variety of possible perceptions of mountain climbing and ways the recreation could be structured. Perhaps colonial mentality required this example, but these visits were timely since by then New Zealand society had developed to the point where local climbing was more likely, and indeed was making a very small beginning on Mt Ruapehu.

Primarily the visitors introduced a new form of sport where the achievement of mountain summits was the fundamental aim. Using specialised alpine climbing equipment such as ice axes for the first time in New Zealand, they gave practical example of the more technical aspects of climbing which distinguished it from uphill walking. But they did much more than this. They suggested, by their attitudes, words and actions, that there could be value and purpose in a closer and different approach to the mountains - a seeking to get to the summits of high mountains, not primarily for scientific or topographical purposes, but for the sake of getting there, and for the exercise and experiences on the way. A new voluntary search for difficulty and achievement in the mountain region would bring physical, mental and spiritual benefits to the individuals concerned. Climbing could be justified on the grounds of it being a form of exercise which developed many attributes such as self-reliance and physical toughness. The exploration required was an adventurous challenge and linked climbing closely to the New Zealand pioneering ethic. The wider community also benefited from climbing. Society could fulfil its continued desire to appropriate and 'civilise' the landscape more thoroughly in a new way, through the 'conquest' of peaks and the detailed documentation of the mountain regions which included the most remote parts of New Zealand.

William S Green, a 35 year old Anglo-Irish clergyman and member of the Alpine Club, arrived in early February 1882 to attempt the ascent of Mt Cook.<sup>1</sup> Green came to New Zealand for the sporting challenge it offered, but he was also consciously asserting an imperialism which perceived the whole world as potential resource and playground for the British. He was inspired in 1881 to attempt Mt Cook by a traveller's photographs of the mountain which he had seen at a meeting in York, and by subsequent examination of Haast's book on the geology of Canterbury and Westland. He had thought of climbing elsewhere but was attracted by the photographs and description of New Zealand mountains which gave him the information needed to make specific

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<sup>1</sup> AJ Aug & Nov 1882, Feb 1883; W S Green *The High Alps of New Zealand* London 1883 - major sources

plans.<sup>2</sup> In traditional English style, Green had with him two Swiss, Ulrich Kaufmann, an experienced mountain guide, and Emil Boss, an innkeeper whose role was that of a professional companion, halfway between a guide and a colleague. Not only did this party come close to success on Mt Cook on 2 March 1882, but, encouraged by Dunedin artist and lawyer William Hodgkins, they also attempted Mt Earnslaw at the head of Lake Wakatipu.

A year later on 25 March 1883, an Austrian scientist, Dr Robert von Lendenfeld, his wife Anna, and a New Zealand porter, Harry Dew, climbed Hochstetter Dome (9258ft) at the head of the Tasman Glacier while on a scientific and surveying expedition for the New Zealand government.<sup>3</sup> Lendenfeld was in the tradition of earlier scientific exploration by Hochstetter and Haast, and was seeking to discover more about the nature and topography of the Mt Cook alpine region. The position of Hochstetter Dome offered panoramic views to help work out topographical problems to the north of Mt Cook. However, the ascent was also recreational as Lendenfeld did not need to reach the summit for his practical purposes. Unlike the previous explorers, Lendenfeld, and possibly his wife, had European climbing experience, and his resolution and hard physical work in the last difficult part of the climb showed clearly that he wished to reach the summit for the satisfaction of doing so.

The New Zealand natural environment was significant to the visitors because it was something of a last frontier, for both recreation and scientific study. Patterns and traditions of climbing were now so well established in Europe that more adventurous climbers felt a strong need to find their challenges elsewhere. Similarly scientific discovery in the natural world was to be made well away from the urbanised, industrialised society of western Europe.<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> Green p2-6

<sup>3</sup> R von Lendenfeld "An Expedition to the Central Part of the Southern Alps" *NZJS* I 1882-1883 p504-12,558-60; R von Lendenfeld "Die Alpen Neuseelands", unknown German journal, p470-503, Mitchell; *NZAJ* 1893 p161-9 - major sources

<sup>4</sup> Lendenfeld spent years in Australia and wrote many scientific papers on its natural environment - Mitchell



visitors helped bring an important new aesthetic to New Zealand, a disposition to prefer the untouched wilderness, and an appreciation of nature not just scenery. In global terms New Zealand was perceived as a less dramatic last frontier than parts of Asia, Africa and the Americas, but it was a British colony, now with a basis of civilisation, which gave opportunity for novel scientific and climbing exploration and achievement.

However, the Green and Lendenfeld climbing expeditions and the publicity about them afterwards were more important from the local perspective since they set an example to New Zealanders in many different ways. Not only did they plant the idea of climbing as a new form of adventure, but they showed how hard work in recreation could bring rewards suitable for British manhood. They focused attention on the very high peaks of the central Southern Alps and encouraged the development of 'civilised' infrastructures at the foot of the mountains. The visitors introduced the concept of mountain guides and defined climbing as a sport for gentlemen assisted by paid labourers. New Zealanders were brought into close contact with the traditions and practices of climbing in Britain and Europe, making yet another link between the new colony and its roots on the other side of the world. Expertise was available from overseas but it would be possible for New Zealanders at both gentlemanly and labouring levels to acquire the skills and experience needed for successful climbing. The concept of a climbing club was floated by Green, suggesting one way in which the new recreation could be organised and given an urban basis. Green and his companions also put forward the idea of closer settlement in the mountains, both to provide mountain guides and to 'civilise' further the landscape. Not all the example and impact of the visitors was appreciated. Their success, especially that of "foreigners" like the Lendenfelds, threatened emergent national pride. Anna von Lendenfeld's achievement, though praiseworthy,<sup>5</sup> seemed an aberration in terms of the place of women in

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<sup>5</sup> *Canterbury Times* 14 April 1883 p5-6

New Zealand society,<sup>6</sup> and Green's assertion of climbing as a paradigm of British manhood remained dominant in the colony.

Green's views appeared to confirm what some members of the more settled and urbanised New Zealand society were beginning to assert, namely that too much of a tame civilised life was not good for individuals or society. Green saw the "desire to overcome difficulty [as] the real inherent power of the dominant races of mankind",<sup>7</sup> with the English, he considered, to the fore. He held "that the essence of all true sport consists in the pleasurable feelings experienced when natural difficulties...are overcome by skill."<sup>8</sup> In class, education and occupation Green was a fairly typical English climber, though more of an adventurer than most, but what he was suggesting was more than just muscular Christianity or an enthusiasm for athleticism. New Zealand settlers had surmounted many obstacles in establishing themselves in the new colony. Now Green proposed that enjoyment and new adventure could be experienced through overcoming difficulties as recreation. He had found rewards in yachting, and briefly in "the tropical forests of the New World" but mountaineering was the form of sport he favoured.<sup>9</sup> He put a high value on climbing by paying for the round-the-world trip for himself and his party just to attempt to climb Mt Cook. In climbing he offered the individual benefits of achievement and of vigorous yet healthy exercise in the natural world created by God. He and Lendenfeld also offered the wider society a new means of appropriating the landscape through reaching the summits and either viewing or exploring their surroundings more closely.

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<sup>6</sup> Anna von Lendenfeld probably wore trousers for climbing. First? suggested by T McCormack Ross "From Glacier Valley to Mountain Summit: The Evolution of Women's Climbing in the Southern Alps 1873-1953" BA Hons Research Essay History OU 1989 p29; Lendenfeld's sketches show three figures in trousers: P Temple ed *Castles in the Air* Dunedin 1973 p43; ATL Photo File 796 Mountaineering 48 MNZ 1/4

<sup>7</sup> Green p3

<sup>8</sup> Green p2

<sup>9</sup> Green p2-5

Though they had some support from a government actively seeking publicity, tourism and detailed knowledge of the landscape,<sup>10</sup> the Green and Lendenfeld expeditions had many difficulties to overcome, both before and during their climbing. They were able to do this through a combination of dogged determination and skill which could be admired by New Zealanders. The Green party was experienced and fairly self-contained, but the Lendenfelds had to rely on the assistance of station hands as porters and this put considerable onus on Robert von Lendenfeld's abilities as a climber and leader.<sup>11</sup> Both parties faced many problems before reaching the Tasman glacier, showing the need for better transport systems and for tracks and accommodation in the mountains. Hochstetter Dome was then a straightforward climb up the glacier for the Lendenfelds, but it was a long way and the ascent included a night out on the return. Green and his party had more difficulties finding a practicable route onto their climbing objective, Mt Cook. It says much for their perseverance and ability that they not only got onto the mountain after several reconnaissances but found various routes by which it was later to be climbed.<sup>12</sup> Their brave effort in almost reaching the summit of Mt Cook was applauded at the time and thereafter.<sup>13</sup> The difficulties reaching Mt Earnslaw were not so great but there the locals proved to have a better idea of a practicable route onto the mountain than Green was able to discover for himself in his brief visit.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Lendenfeld was working for the government. Green's party had free railway passes - Green p98

<sup>11</sup> Harry Dew was presumably the best of the porters the Lendenfelds employed, but that may mean little since they had problems getting porters - H von Haast *Julius von Haast* p204, quoting T D Burnett. Shepherds roamed the hills, but did not usually enter the world of ice and snow.

<sup>12</sup> Kaufmann favoured the route used by Zurbriggen in 1895, but Green chose the Linda glacier route because it enabled the climbers to see their way ahead - *AJ* Vol XVIII 1914 p228

<sup>13</sup> *Press* 13,14,15 March 1882 p2-3; *ODT* 14 March 1882 p2-3

<sup>14</sup> Green p316

In spite of the absence of alpine climbing in New Zealand before these visitors, there had been sufficient contact between the colony and the other side of the world for there to be no doubt about what the ascent of a mountain peak was, and the Lendenfelds confirmed that it was reaching the very summit. However, the definition of a successful alpine ascent was blurred by the Mt Cook climb of Green and his party. They turned back less than 200 ft below the summit with survival the main issue in deteriorating weather late in the day. They felt the climb was as good as done. Green did not quite claim an actual ascent,<sup>15</sup> but he later suggested that they had been successful and that the actual topmost point was of little importance:

the summit of the mountain was now comparatively flat. But when little more than an hour of daylight remained, we dared not risk the loss of twenty precious minutes, for what seemed a mere matter of detail.<sup>16</sup>

He virtually argued that the ascent had been achieved because the difficulties had been overcome.

Others claimed the ascent for Green, particularly newspapers whose headlines suggested a complete ascent,<sup>17</sup> and there was some confusion about what constituted the ascent of a mountain.<sup>18</sup> However, once New Zealanders started climbing, the summit of Mt Cook became more important than it might otherwise have been because it had not quite been reached. This was unfinished business since the 'final' possession of the summit of New Zealand had not been made, the ultimate unknown had not been made known, and it

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<sup>15</sup> *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* No 9 December 1882 p642-53, also reprinted in *NZJS* Vol I 1882-3 p443-54; Green p248-9

<sup>16</sup> Green p250

<sup>17</sup> For example: *Press* 13,14 March 1882 p2; *ODT* 14 March p3; *Timaru Herald* 18 March 1882; *Illustrated Australian News* 19 April 1882 p58 Mitchell. It occurred later as well: *Press* 3 March 1932 p5. Even the New Zealander Arthur Harper, usually a stickler for accuracy, wrote in 1896: "[Green's] climb should be considered the real first ascent." *Pioneer Work in the Alps of New Zealand* London 1896 p327

<sup>18</sup> Subsequent writings from an Anglo-centric viewpoint have seen more merit in Green's heroic failure than in the later New Zealand success by a more difficult route: R L G Irving *Ten Great Mountains* London 1940 p31-54; R L G Irving *A History of British Mountaineering* London 1955 p135; S Styles *On Top of the World* London 1967 p69-85 (inaccurate)

became a matter of native pride to achieve that. Indeed Green himself had made it clear that the summit was the objective in climbing. In demonstrating that Mt Cook could be climbed Green showed that the summits of all New Zealand mountains might be achieved by adventurous and sporting men. The highest was the most attractive as the ultimate 'conquest' of the landscape, but the Lendenfelds' success on Hochstetter Dome and Green's attempt on Mt Earnslaw showed that any alpine summit could be a legitimate aim.

In his open advocacy of recreational climbing for New Zealanders, Green did more than provide a practical example to be followed. After his climb on Mt Cook, Green stayed with Bishop Harper at Ilam, Christchurch, for a few days and spoke at a public dinner given by the Christchurch Athletic Club. He made it clear he believed colonial mountains were worth climbing. He recommended the formation of a New Zealand alpine club and the building of huts in the Southern Alps to foster the recreation.<sup>19</sup> There were by this time many huts in the European Alps which made climbing there much easier, and they would have been a most helpful extension of the civilised world into the New Zealand mountains. However, it was unlikely that huts would be built or an alpine club created before there were any New Zealand climbers. Just as a club was formed in England after Englishmen began climbing, to help combine their energies and knowledge, so the New Zealand Alpine Club was to be founded in 1891 by a small group with an existing interest in the mountains. In 1882 there was thought of forming a Canterbury Alpine Club but nothing was actually done.<sup>20</sup>

After the Lendenfeld alpine activity in 1883 much of the advocacy of climbing as a recreation came not from the visitors but from New Zealanders. Perhaps Lendenfeld was limited by his government employment, but he was also unlikely to encourage recreational climbing because his basic purpose was exploration. There was praise in rather high-flown terms for the ascent of

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<sup>19</sup> Green p287

<sup>20</sup> *Canterbury Times* 14 April 1883 p5

Hochstetter Dome, but one journalist was scathing about the failure of New Zealanders to show the interest and initiative needed to perform such feats in their own mountains. An emergent national pride was affronted by the success of the non-British Lendenfelds. Apart from the brief but vague interest in climbing stimulated by Green, the reaction after the climb of Hochstetter Dome was the first public indication since Governor Bowen in 1871-3, that New Zealand mountain summits were within the reach of 'civilised' society, and that New Zealanders could and should make 'conquest' of their own land by climbing its mountains.<sup>21</sup>

As well as tracks, huts and an alpine club Green and his companions wished to see other civilising of New Zealand's mountain region. They envisaged a humanising of the landscape through settlement of a mountain people. Of the descent from Mt Earnslaw Green wrote:

Kaufmann and Boss, on seeing the profusion of timber, could not help picturing the snug chalets which Swiss settlers might here build for themselves.

The very idea seemed to add a new beauty to the scene, as what one misses most of all in these *oberlands* of the south, is the charming little chalet and the tinkle of the cow-bells.<sup>22</sup>

Green decided Swiss immigrants would be best as they could also serve as mountain guides to "teach the young...how to climb, and the high Alps of New Zealand would then be as healthy a playground for Australasia as Switzerland is for Europe."<sup>23</sup> There is a certain irony in this vision since Green chose to come to New Zealand partly because of the "*wild sport*"<sup>24</sup> offered by its apparently 'virgin' natural state. The mountains lacked an indigenous population and so

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<sup>21</sup> *Canterbury Times* 14 April 1883 p5-6

<sup>22</sup> Green p317. *Mannering With Axe* p6, and Harper *Pioneer Work* p315, expressed similar sentiments. Peter Gibbons, in T Sturm ed *The Oxford History of New Zealand literature in English* Auckland 1991 p50, suggests Harper was echoing Samuel Butler, but Green seems the more likely model. However, such a comment is untypical of New Zealanders. In other writing Harper is more than happy with the lack of civilisation in the New Zealand mountains, *NZAJ* 1893 p134-42.

<sup>23</sup> Green p319

<sup>24</sup> Green p2

had greater appeal because of they were not only remote but untouched. The wilderness appealed to the visitors and increasingly to New Zealanders, but they all desired a greater imposition of humanity and human structures upon it. This might help to open up new country for settlers, and 'civilisation' closer to the mountains would make climbers' recreation more attainable.

Green's reliance on a guide, his view that climbing should only occur with the labour of guides,<sup>25</sup> and the use the Lendenfelds made of porters suggested the imposition of a class structure on mountaineering in New Zealand such as the English had created in their European climbing. Middle-class New Zealanders did not reject this out of hand, and those who took up climbing sometimes sought assistance. A skilled guide like Ulrich Kaufmann offered a considerable degree of safety to climbers whether they were novice or experienced, and porters to carry the heavy loads up to a climbing camp could conserve climber energy. However, three factors worked against the early development of mountain guides. Firstly, such guides only existed in Europe, and in New Zealand there was no indigenous population to turn into a mountaineering labour force. Secondly, the class lines upon which English climbing was based had no equivalent in the more fluid colonial society. In spite of the fact that Green and the Alpine Club were the most relevant models for New Zealand climbers, it was not clear that the same pattern was appropriate. Finally, both Green and Lendenfeld set an example which fitted them into New Zealand society and suggested guides were not necessary. They did much of the hard physical work themselves on their climbing expeditions, and made it clear that in a pioneering context such labour was acceptable for a gentleman climber.

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<sup>25</sup> Green p319

## THE WIDER SOCIETY AND THE MOUNTAIN WORLD

The visiting overseas 'experts', Green and Lendenfeld, gave legitimacy to climbing at a time when there was a more favourable environment for its development. Many trends in the changing New Zealand society were encouraging to recreational climbing, but it was the collective nature of the trends which was more important than any individual factor. Some of the change centred round the less pioneering nature of society and the development of a more New Zealand centred community.<sup>26</sup> There was a growth of urban centres where the number of middle-class people similar to Green and Lendenfeld increased. There was greater focus on organised sport and recreation in society but also some desire for leisure activity on the edges of 'civilisation' where there might be more adventure and challenge. Exploration continued, but usually without a direct exploitative purpose, and the value of the mountains was affirmed by the growth of tourism and a developing awareness of a need to conserve what remained of the natural environment in New Zealand. The mountain region was also becoming more clearly defined as 'civilisation' extended its net through discovery which increased knowledge, and through settlement which brought human infrastructures. Some of these systems penetrated on a more permanent basis into the mountains, encouraging and providing for both tourists and climbers.

The forces at work transforming the social structure of New Zealand were to provide a largely urban impetus for sport and recreation. By 1881 most Pakeha still lived in small towns or the country, but there were over 100,000 people in the four main centres and their adjacent boroughs, approximately a fifth of the whole population. Dunedin led the way with over 40,000, though both Auckland and Christchurch were to outstrip it by 1891.<sup>27</sup> It was these cities

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<sup>26</sup> 1886 census revealed nearly 52% of Pakeha had been born in New Zealand - W H Oliver with B Williams eds *The Oxford History of New Zealand* Wellington 1981 p112

<sup>27</sup> *The New Zealand Official Year-Book* 1900 p94; W H Oliver *The Story of New Zealand* London 1960 p122



which provided the context for an explosion of team games and other sporting recreations. The cities also provided the first group of New Zealand climbers though their more individualistic activity was not necessarily encouraged by the urban context of mass and team sport. One of the pressures of New Zealand society of the 1880s, especially in the urban environment, was a desire for conformity and order, and organised sport could fulfil this communal need. Many sports not only grew rapidly in the 1870s and 1880s at local and regional level, but they became much more codified. With the release of various animals and fish into the landscape, shooting and fishing grew in availability and popularity. Cricket, horse racing, rowing, tennis and athletics all developed in terms of both participation and organisation. There was football of several sorts in the 1870s, but by the 1880s rugby was the most popular and as more clubs and provincial unions were formed, rules were increasingly standardised.

But urbanisation itself also encouraged people to look further afield for recreation. Previously adventurous people had been involved in pioneering, exploring and surveying. By the 1880s, the more settled, secure society began to be perceived by some as too tame. Urbanisation and the development of capital encouraged the growth of a middle class which had the wealth to use leisure time for a variety of pursuits. Most people were content to be involved in musical and artistic recreations, or some of the many sports, but others looked outside the urban setting. Pedestrianism became more than a means of travel in the 1870s and 1880s, and walking as a sport and athletic competition, often for wagers, remained popular for many years.<sup>28</sup> Among the better-off, energetic walking became more recreational. "Walking on the Peninsula Hills was frequent. Numbers of good lady walkers used to join us - even to Akaroa",

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<sup>28</sup> W Ingram *Legends in their Lifetime* Wellington 1962 p156-61; N Harris *Lap of Honour* Wellington 1963 p11-18

wrote George Mannering of his life in Christchurch about 1890.<sup>29</sup> Others sought greater adventure, and the more remote natural world came to be seen as a possible context for this.

A search for adventure in the mountains was encouraged by the fact that the New Zealand mountains were more widely known, not just because of exploration, but through the many artistic and photographic impressions of mountain country. From the 1870s "the lakes, the fiords, and the mountains had become a familiar part of each colonist's natural heritage."<sup>30</sup> Artists portrayed lakes and mountains, sometimes in romantic style. Photographers had been producing scenic views for the domestic and overseas markets from the late 1860s, and some photographers were not far behind explorers in their mountain activity.<sup>31</sup> Through these visual means, and the written word, awareness of the New Zealand mountains was increased and thus they became more accessible.

Knowledge of the mountains and a desire for adventure helped lead to an increasing consciousness of the value of the 'wilderness' to society. This revaluation of the natural world showed itself in two ways not then seen as mutually exclusive. An awareness of the beauty of the rivers, bush and mountains, and an interest in their flora and fauna, stimulated desire to visit the less 'civilised' parts of New Zealand. For some people scholarship or emotional satisfaction were the objectives, but for others the natural world became a setting for adventure and recreation. All of this could lead to modification of the natural environment. At the same time the destruction of the natural world brought about by Pakeha was becoming very clear and from

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<sup>29</sup> G Mannering *Eighty Years in New Zealand* Christchurch 1943 p55

<sup>30</sup> E Olssen *A History of Otago* Dunedin 1984 p228

<sup>31</sup> H Knight *Photography in New Zealand A Social and Technical History* Dunedin 1971 p53-81

the 1880s there were a few outspoken conservationists.<sup>32</sup> Primarily they wished to preserve native birds, plants and landscapes, but there was also an awareness that the 'wilderness' had to be looked after if it was to be available for the recreation of future generations. The desire for the preservation of natural beauty and of native flora and fauna was a strong influence towards the establishment of reserves, and the later development of national parks which were the setting for most mountain climbing.<sup>33</sup>

Tourism in New Zealand grew markedly in the 1880s and became of some importance for mountain climbing. All tourist activity was a form of adventure and discovery and in New Zealand it usually focused on aspects of the natural world. This stimulated preservation of what visitors wished to see and some of the places they wished to visit were mountain regions. There had always been adventurous travellers who went to many different places in New Zealand but by the 1870s visitors were journeying more regularly to somewhere unique like Rotorua and the Pink and White Terraces.<sup>34</sup> As society became more settled and the landscape better known, effort could be made to cater for tourists. The government's development of transport and communications, especially the South Island railways and roads, encouraged tourism in the 1880s. Christchurch and Dunedin were connected by rail in 1878 and lines were quickly pushed further inland. Hotels or accommodation houses provided other facilities and more out of the way places became easier to reach. Green had benefited from the railway to Albury in South Canterbury, and from the rail and steamer system which made it possible for him to travel easily from

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<sup>32</sup> T H Potts *Out in the Open* 1882, reprint Christchurch 1976 (Potts had been an outspoken conservationist for many years); *Taranaki Herald* 5 March 1890 p2 "The Ascent of Mount Egmont with Sir W Fox's Party"; J Pascoe ed *Mr Explorer Douglas* Wellington 1957 p80-3,123,129,174-6,183-5,221-90; C Maclean *Tararua* Wellington 1994 p101

<sup>33</sup> *AJHR* 1883 C-1 p3, 1889 H-18 p1; J Wilson p200; J Hall-Jones *Fiordland Explored* Wellington 1976 p141

<sup>34</sup> I Rockel *Taking the Waters* Wellington 1986 p20; J Watson "The History of Leisure, Recreation and Tourism in New Zealand" in H C Perkins & G Cushman eds *Leisure, Recreation and Tourism* Auckland 1993 p18

Christchurch to Queenstown.<sup>35</sup> All these facilities assisted tourists but they also made it easier for mountain recreationalists to reach some of their chosen destinations.

There was private commercial involvement in tourism at a more local level and one establishment for tourists was coincidentally to be most significant for the development of climbing. On his own initiative Frank Huddleston built 'The Hermitage' near Mt Cook in 1884-5. By the time this hostel was opened in mid-1885 to accommodate tourists it was owned by a group of South Canterbury runholders and Timaru businessmen.<sup>36</sup> Huddleston, an artist who had long been interested in the mountains and climbing,<sup>37</sup> became not only manager of the Hermitage but also ranger in the area.<sup>38</sup> He acted as guide on the glaciers and lesser peaks, and was joined in this from the 1889-90 season by Jack Adamson, son of a small-farmer in South Canterbury.<sup>39</sup> James Annan, then employed by the Rabbit Board, was often available as porter.<sup>40</sup> Though the Hermitage never made a profit for its owners,<sup>41</sup> it provided a service desired by tourists, and simultaneously was a base for climbers among New Zealand's highest mountains. The very existence of such accommodation<sup>42</sup> encouraged people into the mountains to seek recreation of some sort, though access was a problem for many years. There was a private coach service to the Hermitage from the rail head at Fairlie from 1 December 1886,<sup>43</sup> but the road was poor and

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<sup>35</sup> Green p112,290-300

<sup>36</sup> 1884 often given as opening date, eg: J Wilson p75. In 1884 Huddleston bought the land and began foundations - O Gillespie *South Canterbury* Timaru 1958 p284,406-7 citing *Timaru Herald* 1884-85

<sup>37</sup> Huddleston had done a some solitary climbing near Mt Earnslaw in the 1870s, including Cleft Pk 1874 - Membership Record Book NZAC Arch

<sup>38</sup> Membership Record Book NZAC Arch; Gillespie p284,405-6; *NZAJ* 1969 p194-5

<sup>39</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* Vol 3 Canterbury p947; *NZAJ* 1953 p279

<sup>40</sup> *Mannering With Axe* p44,92-4; *NZAJ* 1936 p391-2

<sup>41</sup> Gillespie p284

<sup>42</sup> The Glenorchy hotels at the head of Lake Wakatipu were another example.

<sup>43</sup> *AJHR* 1886 C-1A p29; Gillespie p406-8

most improvements to access had to be provided by the government. Extensive public work on the road to Mt Cook and the glaciers began as early as 1885-86 but transport only became more assured after T N Brodrick surveyed and constructed a road on the west side of the lake in 1892.<sup>44</sup> Brodrick was also involved in surveying the glaciers, which led to better maps of the area,<sup>45</sup> and tracks were cut to improve access.<sup>46</sup>

Elsewhere there was continued pioneering exploration which expanded knowledge of the New Zealand mountains and began to involve ascents. Geologist Hubert Cox had vague thoughts of climbing Mt Cook from the west till his ascent of the range between the Fox and Balfour valleys in January 1875 suggested Mt Cook was east of the Main Divide.<sup>47</sup> Donald Sutherland and Samuel Moreton attempted Mitre Peak at Milford Sound, on 7 February 1883, though route-finding difficulties meant they climbed a knob well to the west. For Sutherland it was part of exploring a territory he felt was his, and an attempt to conquer the most dominant feature of it; for Moreton, it was more in the nature of sport, though as an artist who knew the area, he may have been looking for a new perspective.<sup>48</sup> Surveyor James Park and party climbed Mt Mahanga (7190ft) in the Nelson Lakes area on 18 March 1884, seeking achievement more than topographical information on what they believed was the highest peak in the region, Mt Franklin.<sup>49</sup> The ascent of Mt Ionia (7390ft) from the Arawata river in South Westland, in February 1885, by Charlie

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<sup>44</sup> AJHR 1886 C-1A p29, 1889 C-1A p26; Gillespie p408-9. Before 1892 the route involved a tricky crossing of the Tasman river. Continued work was needed - AJHR 1894 C-1 p53, 1896 C-1 p20

<sup>45</sup> AJHR 1889 C-1A p13-14,32-3, 1890 C-5 p17, 1891 C-1A p39-43. Map shown at the Dunedin Exhibition 1889-90 and reproduced in: Mannering *With Axe & M Ross Aorangi* Wellington 1892

<sup>46</sup> AJHR 1890 C-5 p34-5, 1891 C-1A p32,40

<sup>47</sup> TNZI 1876 p577-81; NZAJ 1935 p122-3

<sup>48</sup> *The Weekly Times* Invercargill 24 February 1883, copy loose in WAK, reprinted NZAJ 1956 p401-6; W Anderson *Milford Trails* Wellington 1974 p29-33,39,44

Douglas and Gerhard Mueller was an unusual feat for such dedicated surveyors, though they were able to make observations from the summit. The climb involved use of a rope, and step-cutting in hard snow with an implement other than an ice axe.<sup>50</sup>

Some of these practical and scientific explorers wished to involve the wider community in the mountain world, but others could not equate exploration with recreation and showed a sense of possessiveness and a desire to exclude the sporting world. Robert Paulin and two companions explored Lake Hauroko in 1882.<sup>51</sup> He thought people should be interested in the country in which they lived and should travel to acquaint themselves with it. Paulin saw exploration as recreational and suggested forming an explorers' association, to bring together the many whom life in pioneer New Zealand had made suitable for exploration and mountain recreation.<sup>52</sup> However, Douglas and other surveyors later expressed considerable scorn towards the claims of achievement by climbers, especially in exploration. Much of this came after FitzGerald's claims 1895-6,<sup>53</sup> but it began earlier. There was concern that recognition was being denied those who rightfully should have it, the surveyors and explorers who did their work anonymously for the Department of Lands and Survey. They had a practical purpose of discovery for the benefit of the colony, and had difficulty accepting the notion of recreation in the mountains.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Transactions* 1884 p350-6; J Pascoe *Great Days in New Zealand Mountaineering* Wellington 1958 p41-4

<sup>50</sup> *AJHR* 1885 C-1A p25; Pascoe *Douglas* p37; *NZAJ* 1948 p207-8, 1984 p18. Perhaps Douglas climbed Ionia solo in 1884 but Pascoe is probably correct that Douglas later confused his years.

<sup>51</sup> R Paulin "A Trip to Lake Hauroto" *NZJS* I 1882-1883 p119-127, map facing p97

<sup>52</sup> His suggested association was similar to the New Zealand Alpine Club formed in 1891. Paulin was a member of that club by October 1892 - *NZAJ* 1892 p123

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter Three

<sup>54</sup> See discussion by Pascoe in *Mr Explorer Douglas* p56,77-8,203,321-2

With the clear exceptions of the Green and Lendenfeld expeditions, most mountain activity in the 1870s and early 1880s had little impact on the wider society and generated neither applause nor imitation. Mountaineering by surveyors and explorers received little publicity since accounts of it tended to be buried in government records<sup>55</sup> or included with scientific papers in other publications.<sup>56</sup> By this time the larger unknowns of the mountain world had been revealed by people like Haast, and only the more inaccessible areas, of less interest to the public, were still to be explored. Many of the complexities of the mountain valleys and ranges of the South Island were not ascertained till the twentieth century. Even the finer detail of a prominent mountain such as the volcano Ruapehu was of little concern. For many years there was confusion over the names of Ruapehu's three summits and about which peak was highest.

Yet all visitors to the mountains in this period, whether explorers, recreationalists or tourists, helped to draw 'civilisation' into that frontier zone and the activities of one group were likely to support and impact on those of another type of mountain visitor. Both tourism and exploration could support climbing. But for mountain climbing to become a New Zealand recreation with a clear existence of its own, it was necessary to distinguish climbing from the work of exploration or the experience of tourism. Separation of the recording of climbs from the annals of exploration, surveying, resources to exploit, or scenery to admire would do much to achieve this. But more than anything else acceptance and development of climbing in the more favourable New Zealand society of the 1880s required local practitioners whose prime aim was reaching the summits.

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<sup>55</sup> *AJHR* 1886 C-1A p13-16, for example

<sup>56</sup> *TNZI* 1879 p419-20, 423, 1886 p327-31, for example

## PIONEERING NEW ZEALAND CLIMBERS

Five New Zealanders took up mountain climbing and put consistent effort into the recreation between 1885 and 1890. The most active and prominent were George (Guy) Mannering who worked in a bank in Christchurch and his friend Marmaduke Dixon who assisted on his father's sheep station nearby.<sup>57</sup> They sought to make high ascents in the Mt Cook area. Climbing in the Otago mountains further south were Malcolm Ross, a journalist in Dunedin, and Harry Birley who was the son of an hotelier in Glenorchy at the head of Lake Wakatipu and thus lived near the mountains.<sup>58</sup> The last to take up climbing was Arthur (AP) Harper, the son of a Christchurch lawyer and grandson of its Bishop. He too qualified as a lawyer.<sup>59</sup> While some sense of a group evolved, it was the individual contributions of these men, and their perseverance, which were important for the development of climbing in New Zealand. Climbing was such a small group activity with so few adherents that a handful of dedicated enthusiasts such as these five could pick up on the example given by the Green and Lendenfeld parties and create a new impetus to link the settled human world and the natural world through mountain climbing.

Though their contributions to the development of recreational climbing varied, the New Zealand pioneers displayed a number of common characteristics. All of them were young, unmarried, New Zealand born,<sup>60</sup> and from the South

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<sup>57</sup> Mannering *With Axe and Rope in the New Zealand Alps, Eighty Years in New Zealand; Cyclopedia of New Zealand* Vol 3 Canterbury p445,447; *Press* 1 August 1918 p9; *NZAJ* 1922 p123-30, 1948 p283-5, 1968 p438-47; *CM* 1948 p237-9; *DNZB* Vol 2 Wellington 1993 p309-10

<sup>58</sup> Green p304-320; *NZAJ* 1892 p30-6; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* Vol 4 Otago p1029; *DNZB* Vol 2 p429-30

<sup>59</sup> Harper *Pioneer Work in the Alps of New Zealand, Memories of Mountains and Men* Christchurch 1946. Arthur Paul Harper was known in climbing circles as 'AP' Harper.

<sup>60</sup> Mannering, Dixon and Ross were all born in 1862, Harper in 1865. Birley's parents were married in 1866. See sources cited above, notes 57,58,59.



Island.<sup>61</sup> With the exception of Birley they were educated, reasonably well-off and similar to the English gentlemen climbing in Europe. Harper and Ross both attended university and three of them, Mannering, Dixon and Harper had close connections to the 'Southern Gentry' who owned the large estates in Canterbury. Mannering, Harper and Ross had middle-class professions. However, they were not as office-bound, well-off, or as imbued with ideas of muscular Christianity and Romanticism as many English climbers. They did not have the time or wealth of Green, nor the scientific background of Lendenfeld, but neither did they have to go so far to find a 'last' frontier. Mannering, Harper and Ross were firmly based in urban centres but some of their leisure pursuits were outdoors, on the fringes of the towns, or in the countryside.<sup>62</sup> Ross, Mannering and Dixon were athletic all-round sporting 'gents'. Climbing held greater attraction than other recreations because the natural world offered greater personal challenges, excitement and risk in a newly perceived and hitherto untouched frontier of unclimbed peaks. Like most New Zealanders at this time they all lived fairly practical lives quite close to the natural world and this perhaps helped prepare them for the pioneering exploration needed before the summits could be attempted.

None of these five had responded immediately to the examples of the visitors,<sup>63</sup> but there is no doubt about the influence of Green. As a lad Birley had been part of Green's attempt on Mt Earnslaw, and in Dunedin Ross may have been influenced by William Hodgkins, another member of that expedition.<sup>64</sup> Green's climb on Mt Cook was the major source of inspiration and his book on his

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<sup>61</sup> Perhaps because of distance no links were made to the mountaineering of a less alpine nature which was developing on Mt Ruapehu through the activity of adventurers and surveyors. Publicity for climbing was also focused in the South Island.

<sup>62</sup> See for example Mannering *With Axe* p119-130, *Eighty Years* p40-56

<sup>63</sup> A younger Mannering had not responded to the mountains when visiting Switzerland, nor to the fact that one of his cousins in England, Harry Fox, was a climber - *Eighty Years* p34-6

<sup>64</sup> Hodgkins corresponded with Green after he left New Zealand (NZAC Arch) and Ross later climbed with both Hodgkins and his son, but no direct causative link has been traced.

climbing trip to New Zealand, published in 1883, was a most important stimulus.<sup>65</sup> He also became a mentor to some of these first climbers, showing a willingness to communicate with them and advise them. He entered into personal correspondence and may have been instrumental in making the *Alpine Journal* available to them. Green sent Ross "an ice-axe and an article on the death-roll of the Alps!" providing both assistance and a warning.<sup>66</sup> Mannering's correspondence was more fruitful. A letter from Green dated 16 November 1886 included with it a sketch map of his route on Mt Cook. This was useful to Mannering in preparing for his second attempt on Mt Cook after teaming up with Dixon the previous winter.<sup>67</sup> However, while people like Green and books from overseas were helpful, New Zealand climbers had to learn climbing skills by experience and do the laborious work for themselves. They had to find their own routes, set up their own camps, become familiar with mountain and weather conditions, and learn about rope management and step-cutting. Most of these skills they had to acquire quickly if they were to be safe and competent high in the mountains and able to enjoy their experiences. From the beginning an indigenous tradition of mountaineering developed, adapting established overseas practices to the less 'civilised' situation of the colony.

In time the New Zealand climbers became relatively independent of tuition from overseas, partly because no more climbers came from overseas in the 1880s to act as models.<sup>68</sup> There was continued reference to English alpine climbing and its structures, in the same way that so many other aspects of New Zealand culture looked back to the 'Home Country'. However, the greatest actual dependence on the other side of the world was for specialist climbing

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<sup>65</sup> An article on Green's expedition published in *NZJS* Vol I 1882-3 p443-54 seems to have been much less important than his book - *Mannering With Axe* p135-6 (includes a tribute to the Lendenfelds); Ross in *NZAJ* 1892 p31

<sup>66</sup> M Ross *A Climber in New Zealand* London 1914 p21

<sup>67</sup> Mannering *With Axe* p32; J Wilson photo of sketch map between p64-5

<sup>68</sup> One reason for this may have been that Green's climb on Mt Cook was publicised as an ascent, which suggested that the main challenge of the New Zealand Alps had been achieved.

equipment. While initial trips used items found or made in New Zealand, and ordinary heavyweight wool clothing was always worn, the climbers were soon aware that purpose-made equipment was preferable. Soon they were importing the genuine articles from the European Alps. For their visit to Mt Cook in February 1887, Mannering and Dixon had "obtained 160 feet of Alpine rope, three good ice-axes from M Fritz Boss of Grindelwald, and suitable nails" for their boots. By January 1890 Mannering and Harper were well-equipped from overseas, though with some local ingenuity in the tents. They had heavy guides' ice axes, alpine rope from England, well-nailed boots, snow goggles, folding lanterns of an Austrian pattern, both prismatic and pocket compasses, and a small lamp stove for cooking.<sup>69</sup>

George Mannering made the greatest contribution to establishing local mountaineering, though the support he had from Marmaduke Dixon was significant. Mannering was the first New Zealander to seek to climb high. His decision to begin seems to have come out of a confluence of ideas and example, and a desire for a more demanding recreation. Starting in March 1886 with his cousin, he aimed to climb the most prestigious and challenging peak, Mt Cook. This was the only very high peak up which a route was known, but it was not the most practical objective for a beginner. On a winter ascent of Mt Torlesse (6434ft) in 1886, Mannering introduced Dixon, a friend from childhood and school, to climbing and they formed the most regular partnership of this period.<sup>70</sup> By the mid-1880s they were in their early twenties and were mature and independent enough for climbing. They were physically fit and used to a variety of outdoor activities. Work commitments meant neither was able to spend much time climbing and requirements of the farming year meant Dixon could usually get away only at times that were not the best for climbing.<sup>71</sup> It

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<sup>69</sup> Mannering *With Axe* p33,35,66-7

<sup>70</sup> Mannering *With Axe* p32 & passim; NZAJ 1921 p123-130

<sup>71</sup> For example, Mannering and Dixon reached the Mt Cook area at the end of March 1889, very late in the climbing season, when days were shorter, temperatures lower, and crevasses much more open.

was the wide variety of challenges and emotional satisfactions to be gained in climbing which encouraged them to persevere. The mountain environment might be many things, pleasant and unpleasant, beautiful and dangerous, but it was always stimulating to these men. Their deeds, which culminated in a near ascent of Mt Cook on 6 December 1890,<sup>72</sup> attracted the attention of the public. Mannering did much to further recreational climbing through his writing and his encouragement of others. In the 1890s he continued to contribute through photography and an interest in glaciology, and both Mannering and Dixon were heavily involved in the New Zealand Alpine Club from 1891. Yet both also had a full life without climbing. Dixon worked with his father in the management of their large estate, and had an important part to play in the creation of the first large-scale irrigation scheme in Canterbury.<sup>73</sup> Mannering developed a career as a banker and maintained interests in music and many different sports.<sup>74</sup>

Malcolm Ross made a different contribution. He was a man of the city, a versatile athlete who represented Otago at rugby but had less involvement in rural sports than Mannering and Dixon.<sup>75</sup> His climbing began slowly on the slopes of Mt Earnslaw, probably in 1885 and 1887, and unlike the other early climbers, most of his achievement was after he married in March 1890. He too played a leading role in the New Zealand Alpine Club in the 1890s. Ross came to genuinely love the mountains, and to enjoy climbing them. However, as a journalist, he saw an opening to make a name for himself writing about New Zealand's mountain country in which society now took a greater interest. His writing, based on personal experience, was important for the greater

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<sup>72</sup> M J Dixon Diary CMA; *Press* 17 December 1890 p5; Mannering *With Axe* p91-105. "We recin we had about 200ft vertical to top. All straight a head step cutting" wrote Dixon in his diary. As with Green's climb, newspapers also heralded this as an ascent - *Press* 17 December 1890 p5

<sup>73</sup> *Cyclopedia* Vol 3 Canterbury p445,447; *Press* 1 August 1918 p9

<sup>74</sup> Mannering sang in groups and solo. He went pig hunting, canoeing, shooting, cycling, fishing and played golf.

<sup>75</sup> S O'Hagan *The Pride of Southern Rebels* Dunedin 1981 p37; *DNZB* Vol 2 p429

popularisation of climbing. It included tourist guides to the Otago lake district, to the Mt Cook area, and to the sounds of Fiordland,<sup>76</sup> and such works gave the wider public more information about the mountains, and about recreational possibilities to be found there. Yet he was often vague about dates and climbs, indicating that while publicising mountain areas was important to him, perhaps for personal and commercial reasons, accurate recording of climbing was not so necessary.

With no easy mountain companionship such as Mannering and Dixon formed, Ross sometimes made use of the most experienced climber in Otago, Harry Birley. To some extent Birley stood apart from the other early climbers and suggested different ways of developing the sport. He was less educated and was restricted by the fact that he made a living helping at the 'Mount Earnslaw' Hotel in Glenorchy. The others were able to visit a variety of mountain regions but all his climbing was done in one small area at the head of Lake Wakatipu, mainly on Mt Earnslaw. Before he was 20, Birley found it was possible to gain some income by guiding visitors to the head of the lake further into his mountain region.<sup>77</sup> By the later 1880s Queenstown was a focus for tourists and many went up the lake. Some wished to be energetic in looking at the sights and a guide such as Birley was useful to them. Guiding and his own solo ascent of Mt Earnslaw on 16 March 1890<sup>78</sup> gave Birley and his parents' hotel a reputation which was good for business.<sup>79</sup> However this ascent and Birley's status as a working-class man drew attention to two issues which posed

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<sup>76</sup> *A Complete Guide to the Lakes of Central Otago* Wellington 1889 (written for the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition in Dunedin 1889-90); W S Gilkison *Earnslaw* Christchurch 1957 p21; *Aorangi* Wellington 1892; *The West Coast Sounds of New Zealand* Dunedin 1892

<sup>77</sup> Green p306,312-20; *NZAJ* 1892 p31-4 (Ross is vague about date); Gilkison *Earnslaw* p22

<sup>78</sup> *ODT* 12 April 1890; *Otago Witness* 17 April 1890 p15; *NZAJ* 1892 p35-6,39; Gilkison *Earnslaw* p25-9

<sup>79</sup> M Ross *Lakes of Central Otago* p102; C D Morpeth "An Ascent of Mount Earnslaw" in J R Blair ed *The Monthly Review* April 1890 p208-213; F Flanagan *New Zealand Tours & Excursions Tourist Guide to the Lakes, Mountains, and Fiords of Otago and Southland* Wellington 1898 adverts p25; (T Cook) *New Zealand as a Tourist and Health Resort* Auckland 1909 p93

difficulties for climbing as a recreation. Doubt was expressed about whether Birley had actually reached the summit which raised the issue of trust.<sup>80</sup> This came about partly because the place of such a working-class climber, who climbed both for his own satisfaction and because he was paid, was doubtful in what was otherwise a middle-class sport. In England his place as a professional guide would have been clearly defined, but not so in New Zealand. Uncertainty about 'class' distinction in climbing was to continue for many years, leading to problems defining climbers and climbing.

The fifth climber, AP Harper, was overseas during most of the above activity, yet he was to have the greatest and most lasting impact on climbing in New Zealand, featuring prominently in mountaineering for more than sixty years.<sup>81</sup> In particular, he did much to influence definitions and patterns of climbing and to set its place in society. Although he had had an early contact with Green in 1882,<sup>82</sup> his introduction to the mountains came while he was studying for a BA degree at Oxford. On a visit to Geneva in 1887, friends challenged him to climb.<sup>83</sup> He enjoyed it and did more, mostly with guides, and was introduced to the Alpine Club. He returned to New Zealand early in 1889 with more grounding in climbing than any other New Zealander while still being ignorant of what his country had to offer. He discovered mountains to be ascended and a few people attempting to climb, but in the end his experience was not fully directed towards the efforts of the self-trained climbers such as Dixon, Mannering and Ross. For them the main focus was summits, often Mt Cook, but after one attempt on that peak,<sup>84</sup> and ill-fortune on his climbs in 1891,<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Birley's claim was vindicated by the second ascent 18 February 1892 - Malcolm and Kenneth Ross found the items Birley said he had left on the summit - ODT 22 February 1892 p2, 11 April 1893 p3

<sup>81</sup> He was active in mountaineering matters till he died in 1955.

<sup>82</sup> Green p285

<sup>83</sup> Harper *Memories* p32-4

<sup>84</sup> Harper *Pioneer Work* p16-9; Mannering *With Axe* p65-72

<sup>85</sup> Harper *Pioneer Work* p26, *Memories* p61-3

Harper adopted a more practical and altruistic view, seeing mountain exploration and mapping as more important than climbing to summits. Both became objectives of the New Zealand Alpine Club in which he had a major founding role.

In the first few years of their activity these five pioneering climbers individually and collectively did much to establish climbing as a recreation. In terms of summits their achievement was little by the end of 1890, but they had overcome many problems and provided a foundation for the future. They had built up a store of equipment and experience and had worked out the approaches to many more mountains than they had climbed. Their deeds and words did much to publicise climbing as a recreation and the four middle-class climbers were also working their way towards systems and structures of mountaineering. Unable to convince many people to join them in their activity, they nonetheless suggested ways in which climbing could be incorporated into the national psyche and accepted by the wider community.

It was not to be expected that these men would reach many summits, and indeed very few more than have already been mentioned were ascended.<sup>86</sup> They aimed very high, often too high for their own skill and experience, and tended to ignore the lesser, easier peaks on which they could have both practised and achieved. Apart from winter climbs on Canterbury foothills they did little to expand the geographical scope of climbing, but concentrated on the two areas Green had highlighted. Furthermore, bad weather, inexperienced party members and sickness<sup>87</sup> all limited activity and their climbing achievement was reduced by the need to explore first. However, by the end of

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<sup>86</sup> Mannering ascended a peak above Ball Pass by himself on 31 March 1889, not Turner's Peak to the north as in Andersen *Jubilee History* p677, but an unnamed knob 7225ft to the south. A few days later he, Percy Johnson and James Annan reached the lower summit of Hochstetter Dome - Mannering *With Axe* p54,58-62. There could be little sense of 'conquest' among these early climbers.

<sup>87</sup> Stomach problems often affected early climbers, perhaps because of their food, though in 1889 it was thought to be the exertion or the drinking of melted snow (Mannering *With Axe* p52). Drinking cold water too quickly can give stomach cramps, but the sickness was often longer lasting.

1890 the New Zealand pioneers had made considerable progress towards overcoming a variety of problems in their chosen recreation. They had acquired skills of exploration and climbing for themselves and learnt what equipment was needed. Their knowledge of mountain conditions and weather was much improved though the problem of carrying all the necessary equipment and food was never fully overcome. The higher and more remote the mountain, the more packing had to be done and 'swags' did not allow for great loads to be carried. Tents and clothing were heavy, as was the fresh and tinned food. The weight limited how many days' supplies the early climbers could take, and so the length of time they could be away from their base was restricted and it was difficult to wait out bad weather. Later, porters, guides and huts were to help resolve these issues.

All the early climbers sought to publicise their mountain recreation in order to increase public acceptance of it. They also hoped more people would take up the sport, and Birley, no doubt, sought more clients. Newspaper articles were one means of advertising, even for Birley;<sup>88</sup> assisting in the taking of mountain photographs for public display and dispersal was another. In 1889 Mannering and Dixon willingly escorted a photographer, F Cooper from Wheeler and Son of Christchurch, up the Tasman glacier to enable him to take photographs, though this probably prevented them from attempting Mt Cook. They wished to acquaint the wider world with their activity and the mountain region beyond the reach of the tourist.<sup>89</sup> Cooper stayed relatively low but in 1890 Birley took the photographer Fred Muir of Morris & Co Dunedin as far up Mt Earnslaw (9250ft) as he could, to about 8000ft.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> ODT 12 April 1890 supp p1. Mannering was the most frequent article writer in this early period, for example: *Press* 26 April & 1 May 1889 p2

<sup>89</sup> Mannering *With Axe* p44-57

<sup>90</sup> ODT 12 April 1890 supp p1



Publicity could be gained, but it was more difficult to convince other people that climbing was a valid New Zealand recreation in the face of the expansion of team sports and urban leisure activities. Harper was aware that their contemporaries thought them lunatic to want to climb mountains and Mannering puzzled over how impossible it was to interest adventure-loving young colonials in climbing. Their peers had other more acceptable pursuits closer at hand and could not see mountain climbing as either a possible or relevant leisure time activity.<sup>91</sup> However, the early climbers were able to endorse and stress positive ideals of climbing because the qualities it was held to encourage and reinforce were ones which were widely valued. Mountaineering could achieve an appropriation of the landscape<sup>92</sup> which was in keeping with pioneering traditions of struggling to survive and to control the natural environment. More significantly, climbing could be and was portrayed as a manly pursuit to which young New Zealanders were most suited. Any young men should be interested in climbing local mountains because their colonial upbringing and environment made them adventurous and tough enough.<sup>93</sup> Mannering considered that colonial life was naturally "calculated to teach self-reliance and independence,"<sup>94</sup> qualities needed by climbers. Ross wrote:

Otago youths are hardy and fond of adventure, the mountains are easily accessible, and, above all, there is a wealth and variety of beautiful scenery such as cannot be seen in any other part of the Colony, and indeed in few countries in the world. At present Alpine climbing here is only in the go-cart of its existence; but with all the advantages that Otago offers there can be no doubt that it will ere long have a lusty existence, and not be without some influence in framing the character of Southern New Zealanders.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Press* 26 April 1889 p2; Mannering *With Axe* p42-3; Harper *Memories* p65

<sup>92</sup> E E Morris ed *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia* Vol III London 1890 p251; *Press* 17 December 1890 p4; *ODT* 21 February 1891 p2

<sup>93</sup> *Press* 26 April 1889 p2; Mannering *With Axe* p42-3; *NZAJ* 1892 p36. Newspaper editors might agree with the climbers - *Press* 18 December 1890 p4

<sup>94</sup> Mannering *With Axe* p91

<sup>95</sup> *NZAJ* 1892 p36-7

But it was not just the qualities young New Zealand males already possessed which were important. In bringing individuals into the natural world and supplying adventure and challenge, climbing would develop and reinforce desirable qualities in young men, especially city-dwellers, and bring out the best in them.<sup>96</sup> After their mountain experience, people who were climbers would be better able to go about their normal lives. The urban norm would be re-validated by the temporary stepping outside of ordinary life through climbing. The struggle to overcome difficulty in the mountains brought physical fitness and even carrying "a real, torturing, colonial swag" was made a virtue.<sup>97</sup> More importantly, climbing brought greater mental and moral fitness, developing 'character' through conquest of self as well as of the natural world. The qualities desired in climbing: energy, perseverance, patience, courage, prudence, restrained enthusiasm and organisation,<sup>98</sup> all created 'character'. They also suggested discipline and the concept of hard work so prized in pioneering New Zealand. The wider society desired all these qualities in its citizens and by contributing to individual well-being, climbing would benefit society.

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<sup>96</sup> Mannering *With Axe* p42-3, a modified version of first part of article *Press* 26 April 1889 p2

<sup>97</sup> Mannering *With Axe* p19-20

<sup>98</sup> Mannering *With Axe* p42-3



## CHAPTER THREE

THE NEW ZEALAND ALPINE CLUB  
AND THE BEGINNINGS OF A NATIONAL TRADITION  
IN THE 1890S

New Zealand climbing developed contradictory tendencies in the 1890s which were never resolved. A few years of much greater climbing activity and achievement resulted in increased public approbation, but also made it difficult for either the public or the mountaineers to define climbers and climbing in New Zealand. A major advance was the formation of existing individual climbers into an organisation, the New Zealand Alpine Club. This was an important local creation, but it was also modelled on the English Alpine Club and was thus an adjunct to English climbing. The club, visits by overseas climbers, and the growth of guided climbing which imposed a 'class' division on the sport in New Zealand, all indicated significant imperial tutelage. However, these developments were not entirely appropriate for the colonial situation, nor for the ways recreational climbing was expanding in New Zealand. Increased and more formalised British climbing influence through the NZAC was opposed by the continued pioneering nature of colonial mountaineering, and by the involvement in New Zealand climbing of a much greater variety of people than on the other side of the world, including women and working-class men. Local developments and ambitions also made it possible for climbing to contribute to an emerging New Zealand identity which might reject imperial models and assumptions of superiority.

## THE FORMALISATION OF CLIMBING

The later nineteenth century was a period, especially in urban society, when associations of people with like interests became more common in New Zealand. Clubs were formed and in many sports local and regional organisations joined into national ones,<sup>1</sup> helping to make their activities more acceptable to the wider society. Most of the pioneering New Zealand climbers of the 1880s belonged to a variety of groups and it was natural for them to seek to join the somewhat scattered and haphazard climbing activity of the previous few years into a mountain organisation. The English Alpine Club example had long been known and the idea of a club was discussed for some time in New Zealand before moves towards a New Zealand Alpine Club began early in 1891.<sup>2</sup> The achievement of Mannering and Dixon on Mt Cook in December 1890, with the publicity it aroused, was one catalyst. A meeting in Christchurch of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science early in 1891, and discussion there about glaciers, stimulated group interest in local mountains.<sup>3</sup> There was an increasing awareness that knowledge of early mountain exploration was being lost, and that a mountaineering club could record this information. Older pioneers and explorers were willing to support such an organisation. It was also hoped a club would encourage more people to take up climbing, and to do so safely.<sup>4</sup> At first it seemed likely that local organisations would emerge rather than a national body, since there were two centres of climbing interest, Dunedin and Christchurch.<sup>5</sup> However, a small meeting in Christchurch on 11 March 1891 decided that the mountaineering club should be for the whole country, to which Dunedin climbers such as Malcolm Ross agreed. A joint committee drew up rules and a constitution

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A p303

<sup>2</sup> M Ross *Aorangi* Wellington 1892 p24

<sup>3</sup> Mannering *With Axe* p107,111; NZAJ 1892 p3

<sup>4</sup> ODT 21 February 1891 editorial p2, supp. p1

<sup>5</sup> NZAJ 1892 p3-5,8-14; 1941 p45-6

which were adopted on 28 July 1891 in Christchurch to create formally the New Zealand Alpine Club. The constitution allowed for regional sections of the club to be formed by groups of climbers with local interests.<sup>6</sup>

Important though colonial circumstances were in creating and shaping the New Zealand Alpine Club, it was based quite consciously on the Alpine Club in England. Harper, who was familiar with the latter, was important in this modelling process, though the time available may not have allowed for direct English assistance in the formation of the New Zealand club.<sup>7</sup> Connections between the English and New Zealand clubs were soon established. One AC member was an original NZAC member, and a few others such as Green soon joined to give the new club financial, practical and moral support.<sup>8</sup> Place of residence was not seen as important for membership and the new club probably hoped to draw more English climbers to New Zealand to serve as models for beginning local climbers. New Zealanders also saw their club as part of a British imperialism expressed in climbing through the Alpine Club, membership of which was something for colonials to aspire to. Mannering and Harper were AC members by 1892, and Harper also made personal connections on a trip to England and the Continent in that year.<sup>9</sup>

The purposes of the New Zealand Alpine Club, its rules and early membership, all attempted to define mountaineers and mountaineering, and clearly the new club was not just for climbing.<sup>10</sup> In New Zealand 28 members and 5 subscribers were elected initially, but fewer than 10 were climbers. The rest were surveyors or explorers, present and past, runholders and others interested in the

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<sup>6</sup> NZAJ 1892 p4

<sup>7</sup> Harper told Ross on 14 April 1891 that he was writing for the Alpine Club rules. He sent a copy of the proposed NZAC rules to Ross on 28 May - Letters Harper to Ross 14 April & 28 May 1891, loose in SLB NZAC Arch

<sup>8</sup> NZAJ 1892 p7-8,123

<sup>9</sup> Harper *Memories* p68-84

<sup>10</sup> The NZAC, of course, could never hope to be a gentlemen's club which was a 'home away from home' as the Alpine Club was in London for its members.

mountains or in supporting such a club. A few who were primarily scientists joined soon after.<sup>11</sup> The aims of the Club also made it clear that for its founders there was more to the mountains than climbing them. The five objectives listed in 1892 expressed a desire to acquire and share topographical and scientific knowledge of the New Zealand mountains, so that the public would come to know more of the mountains and access to them would be improved.

Exploration and climbing were to be the main physical activities, but there was no clearly stated intention to encourage and develop recreational climbing in New Zealand.<sup>12</sup> A continuing assumption was that the intrinsic worth of the activity would lead to growth.

Though climbing was only one of the club's multiple aims, attempts were made to codify that recreation. Club rules were an opportunity to define who should and should not climb, and to establish codes of conduct and a value system for climbing. In New Zealand where the mountains were reasonably accessible to all it was difficult to enforce specific ways of climbing in what was a voluntary activity. Climbing practice did become relatively standardised, not because of agreement among club members, but because of the nature of the mountains, the limited equipment available, and the restricted models accessible to New Zealanders. Values in climbing and attitudes to the mountains and climbing were more varied. It was difficult to reach agreement on such matters even though the number of climbers was small, for they were scattered, they came from differing backgrounds, and not all belonged to the NZAC. Lack of commonality and insufficient grouping of members made it difficult for the club to dominate and define either climbers or climbing.

While the founders of the New Zealand Alpine Club hoped its existence would lead to more climbing, the club was not set up to foster climbing in practical ways or to sponsor climbing from the grass roots. One problem was the

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<sup>11</sup> NZAJ 1892 p7-8,123

<sup>12</sup> NZAJ 1892 p3-4,7-9

institution of a qualification for membership to the NZAC which prevented beginner climbers from joining the club. Some mountain activity had to come before membership which indicates the club was intended to be exclusive, to help only those who were already climbing, not to introduce newcomers to the activity.<sup>13</sup> In 1891 Ross was uncertain about the benefits of a qualification, and he suggested "we shall have to stretch a point at first and not have a very high standard" since otherwise the potential membership would be very small. He was aware of his own limited climbing, yet he was the only person in Dunedin with alpine experience.<sup>14</sup> Harper agreed that the qualification should not initially be too strict,<sup>15</sup> but the model of the English club may have altered his thinking. It was Harper's influence which restricted membership to those who already had a record of climbs or mountain exploration of some sort. Harper wrote in 1925, in response to a challenge about how the Club was constituted:

Speaking as one of the founders...our ideal was...to make the membership...an honour to be worth attaining. We based our qualification on that of the A.C., and I think we were, in 1891, the only Alpine Club...which required a qualification at all equal to that of the A.C.<sup>16</sup>

A certain imperial pride was taken in identifying with the exclusiveness of the English club, and this was echoed in 1941 when Harper wrote for the fiftieth jubilee: "We were the only other Alpine Club with a qualification standard."<sup>17</sup> But all this did was make it very difficult for non-climbers or beginners, especially those who were poorer or female, to join the club and go climbing. There was a second level of membership, the subscriber, which might have provided for novice climbers, but this did not occur. The concept of subscribers was introduced to help include those, such as Joanna Harper mother of AP

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<sup>13</sup> Letter Ross to Dixon 11 October 1893 LBE

<sup>14</sup> Letters Ross to Harper 13 March 1891, 3 June 1891, loose in SLB

<sup>15</sup> Letters Harper to Ross 4 June, 6 July 1891, loose in SLB; A P Harper scrapbook PP NZAC Arch

<sup>16</sup> NZAJ 1925 p292

<sup>17</sup> NZAJ 1941 p46



Harper, who were interested in the mountains but did not intend to climb.<sup>18</sup> The subscriber also became a grade of membership for non-British climbing visitors who were unlikely to return to the colony.<sup>19</sup>

There was no debate over the inclusion in the NZAC of British climbers, or even of foreigners who climbed in New Zealand. However, as the club sought to establish a local climbing community and culture, other questions of membership were not resolved so easily. Not all the New Zealanders who climbed mountains joined the club, and there was considerable uncertainty about who should be allowed to join. The founders of the club were male middle-class New Zealanders for whom climbing was a leisure pursuit, and the involvement of any women and of men lower in the social scale required negotiation. The English concepts of elite and common, of amateur and professional, were at odds with the colonial ethos of greater egalitarianism. There was some desire to achieve as wide a membership as possible given the small number of people climbing. For a time there was acceptance within the club of labourers who acted as guide-climbers, but eventually the NZAC decided that in terms of class it would be exclusive and membership became middle-class. In contrast, the club included women from the beginning, though few of them had the opportunity to qualify for membership.

The acceptance of middle-class women in the NZAC was an attempt to be inclusive in a number of different ways. It was perhaps a response to the women's movement in New Zealand at the time, as well as to the more specific interest a few women had in the mountains in 1891. However, it was also a recognition of the contribution women had made to pioneering New Zealand and a testament to the past involvement of women in mountain adventure. Most women's mountain activity had not been climbing, nor in the realm of snow and ice, but it had been energetic. The first woman had made a summer

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<sup>18</sup> NZAJ 1941 p46

<sup>19</sup> The experienced alpinist Dr Franz Kronecker of Berlin climbed in New Zealand in 1894 (see below) and became a subscriber rather than a member - NZAJ 1895 p67

ascent of Mt Egmont as early as 1855. The little publicised climb of Etheldreda Birch on Mt Ruapehu in 1881, using a rope and spending much of the day on snow, showed that women were capable of alpine climbing. Anna von Lendenfeld was in the first party to ascend Hochstetter Dome in March 1883. The *Canterbury Times* specifically congratulated her on her qualities and success but a foreign visitor was seen as an exception.<sup>20</sup> It was not then expected that New Zealand women would take up mountain climbing, but within ten years they were beginning to be more vigorous in the mountains.<sup>21</sup>

There were difficulties for all who wished to climb in the late nineteenth century, but the nature of society and its expectations meant there were more problems for women than for men. Pioneering adventure was a male activity, so women had little part to play in the exploration of New Zealand. Climbing, in its European origins and in New Zealand in the 1880s, was also primarily defined and practised by men.<sup>22</sup> Leisure activities for women tended to be sedentary and linked to domestic duties. Most women lacked the economic as well as the social freedom to visit the mountains, and recreational initiative was usually with men in middle-class society. Yet changes were occurring for women. In the 1890s physical activities such as cycling and walking, as well as sports like tennis and hockey, were becoming possible for middle-class women. Cycling was a feature of the period and was linked to calls for dress reform. Whether the first wave of New Zealand feminism in the 1880s and 1890s, directed first at alcohol and morality, and then at securing parliamentary franchise for women, had specific impact on women's climbing is debatable.

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<sup>20</sup> *Canterbury Times* 14 April 1883 p5

<sup>21</sup> Three sisters, Annie, Florence & Emily Parsons made an ascent of Mt Tapuaenuku (9465ft) in the Inland Kaikoura Range on 19 February 1890 - *Press* 12 April 1890. The first women crossed the Milford Track early in 1890 - *ODT* 19 April 1890 Supp p1; Anderson *Milford Trails* p43-6; S Ell ed *The Adventures of Pioneer Women in New Zealand* Auckland 1992 p127-9, citing Eleanor Adams "The Milford Track" MSP 3542 ATL. Adams was eleven and the year 1890, though Adams writes "early in 1889" and Ell has 1888.

<sup>22</sup> Expectations of women in the mountains were perhaps not greatly changed nearly 100 years later. See comments about the attitudes of NZ male climbers, including Hillary, towards women climbing: A Blum *Annapurna A Woman's Place* London 1980 p1-3,67

Women's inclusion in the NZAC may have been aided by them becoming more emancipated in many aspects of life, including the law, education and politics. However, before the turn of the century a woman who wished to pursue a physically active recreation needed to be courageous, even daring, if she was to do so. Middle-class expectations of women and what was feminine were great limitations. Women were to be decorative not physically active or energetic, and were regarded as unsuited to rough travel. They were not to get dirty or sunburnt, but were to wear corsets and voluminous skirts almost to the ground, though more suitable clothing was sometimes possible in the mountains. Lack of physical fitness might be a problem for women seeking active recreation, and the need for chaperonage was also a restriction. The main aim of women was thought to be marriage, and athleticism and independence were not requirements for that.

Women were thus likely to be excluded either informally or formally from climbing, but in New Zealand there was no absolute exclusion in either sense. It was uncommon for women to take part in mountain climbing, but it was possible, and women were permitted to join the NZAC from its inception in 1891. There was doubt among male climbers about the matter, but the fact that women could be members indicates something of the fluid nature of colonial society. Given the all-male nature of the English Alpine Club and the fact that climbing was a tough and rough physical activity far from 'civilisation', it was unusual and surprising that women were included.<sup>23</sup> When the constitution of the NZAC was being formulated Malcolm Ross was diffident about women joining. His wife Bessie had been into the mountains but had not then done any climbing. Ross may have felt Harper would be against women members because of their exclusion from the Alpine Club. He wrote rather uncertainly to Harper: "I should like you...to consider...whether ladies who climb say a mountain 8000ft high shd be elected honorary members of the club".<sup>24</sup> It was

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<sup>23</sup> The French Alpine Club had women members from 1874 (Engel *Mountaineering in the Alps* p136; M Cappon *Rock and Ice Climbing* London 1983 p23), but the all-male English club was the model for New Zealand.

<sup>24</sup> Letter Ross to Harper 12 April 1891, loose in SLB

the desire of Harper's mother to support the club and be involved in it which led to the inclusion of women in a more than honorary role. He later wrote:

At dinner, my mother (who in 1872 had ridden to the Tasman, camping near the present Hermitage site) asked if we could provide for some recognition of those interested in mountaineering but unable to climb. This was the origin of the provision for "subscribers" in our rules.<sup>25</sup>

But women were not limited to being subscribers, who at this stage were to be passive members of the club.<sup>26</sup> In the rules there was no formal bar to women becoming full members of the NZAC, and thus the weight of custom and attitude in society, and the example of the Alpine Club, were all put aside. Joanna Harper and another woman were subscribers by March 1892, and Bessie Ross was a member by October that year, with a further woman subscriber.<sup>27</sup> By this time improved transport and accommodation and the growth of tourism were all helping women to visit more remote places. The provision, increasingly, of 'civilisation' in the mountains in the form of tracks, huts and guides made it easier for women to be active when they reached that region. Perhaps influenced by the dress reform movement, they occasionally wore trousers for their mountaineering which greatly improved their chances of achievement.<sup>28</sup> There was also the example of women elsewhere: they had been climbing in the European Alps since the 1860s and there was greater tolerance of their activity by the 1890s.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> NZAJ 1941 p46. Dinner 27 March 1891 at Harper residence Ilam; trip to Mt Cook glaciers March 1873

<sup>26</sup> NZAJ 1892 p4, 1941 p46. Harper NZAJ 1925 p292 implies subscribers were seen initially as active

<sup>27</sup> NZAJ 1892 p7,123

<sup>28</sup> Bessie Ross was the principal exponent 1892 and 1895, though she wore a skirt climbing in 1897 and 1900. Photos: Hocken E3088/21, from relative Adam Grant (Sydney), Ross *Climber* facing p158,182, p233, J Binney, J Bassett & E Olssen *All Illustrated History of New Zealand 1820-1920* Wellington 1990 p251; K Ross "The AGE-ARGUS Exploration and Alpine Climbing Expedition to Fiordland" Typescript 1953 CMA. J Malthus "Bifurcated and Not Ashamed". Late Nineteenth-Century Dress Reformers in New Zealand" in *NZJH* April 1989 p32-46

<sup>29</sup> Clark *Victorian* p175-85

A number of women made alpine ascents throughout the 1890s, with Mt Earnslaw<sup>30</sup> and Hochstetter Dome<sup>31</sup> the major peaks climbed. However, social custom ensured that women were dependent in the mountains. Their adventure was determined and mediated by the men - guides or other mountaineers - who led the expeditions.<sup>32</sup> It was possible for women to climb but very few repeated the experience or showed long term interest. It remained very difficult for women to become climbers. Few had the freedom from domestic ties or the financial independence necessary to spend active time in the mountains which was a prerequisite for qualifying to join the NZAC. Many of those who climbed or enjoyed more moderate physical exercise and adventure in the mountains were from overseas. They may have done enough to qualify for the NZAC, but they did not join the club because they were only temporarily in New Zealand or did not see climbing as more than a passing experience. Furthermore, after the initial acceptance of women in 1891-2 the club became more male-centred and the energetic climbing of the period 1893-5 was often higher and more difficult than was thought possible for women. The club itself did not foster the involvement of beginners, it did nothing to encourage women mountaineers, and in the end failed to include them.

## A DIFFERENT CLASS OF CLIMBER

The principal challenge to the middle-class ethos and membership of the NZAC did not come from women but from working-class men who took up climbing in the 1890s. Social and economic pressures could exclude women from climbing even if it was possible for them to belong to the club, but working-class men could not be prevented from climbing though they might be

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<sup>30</sup> ODT 14 March 1894 p2; letter J O'Leary to WJP Hodgkins 17 March 1894 NZAC Arch

<sup>31</sup> *Press* 2 April 1894; *NZAJ* 1894 p295-6,341-50; *New Zealand Times* 8 May 1897; *AJHR* 1898 C-1 p114; ODT 23 February 1900; *Ross Climber* p143,178

<sup>32</sup> The only exception is a possible ascent of Mt Rosa (6997ft), perhaps in 1890, by Rosa Moorhouse and Mabel Studholme - Andersen *South Canterbury* p678

kept from the club. Initially the founders wished to include a variety of people interested in the mountains. When skilled and unskilled labourers took the lead in New Zealand climbing in the years 1893 to 1895, their pioneering energy and achievement had to be admired and applauded. However, other visitors to the mountains allowed these young men also to take up guiding as paid employment, and the leaders of the NZAC had difficulty reconciling climbing as both work and play with their middle-class and amateur ideals.

Climbers who were paid guides and had other labouring jobs existed almost from the beginning of New Zealand climbing. For the guides climbing was only partly recreational, and it was also extra to their usual employment. In the 1880s Harry Birley had shown that living close to the mountains enabled more frequent climbing which quickly developed skills and experience. He was able to finance and justify this activity by offering himself for employment as a guide, and Joseph O'Leary did the same at the head of Lake Wakatipu in the 1890s.<sup>33</sup> There were guides on Mt Egmont from the late 1880s,<sup>34</sup> while by 1890 Frank Huddleston at the Hermitage had been joined by Jack Adamson as guide.<sup>35</sup> In the Mt Cook area the attraction for active visitors was more the glaciers than the peaks, so opportunities to climb high were few before 1893, but Huddleston and Adamson built up alpine experience which assisted climbers. Overall the pattern was similar to that in Europe. People of lower socio-economic status became the labourers or guides employed by the wealthier people who chose to visit the mountains as tourists or climbers.

The English background to climbing in New Zealand created uncertainty from 1891 over the involvement in the NZAC of climbers who were not middle-class or who were paid to climb. For Alpine Club members climbing in Europe the

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<sup>33</sup> Joseph O'Leary (brother of 'Arawata Bill') first climbed Mt Earnslaw in 1893 (*ODT* 13 April 1893 p3) and he led the first ascent by women on 8 March 1894 - *ODT* 14 March 1894 p2; letter J O'Leary to WJP Hodgkins 17 March 1894 NZAC Arch

<sup>34</sup> Scanlan *Egmont Story* p54-60

<sup>35</sup> *NZAJ* 1953 p279

matter was clear: the club was for gentlemen of the middle class; the guides, who did much of the hard physical work, were foreign peasants, clearly of inferior status, and not to be included in the club. Yet in New Zealand there were no mountain dwellers to employ as guides, and the climbers of the 1880s willingly did much of the hard physical labour for themselves as had been done by settlers since 1840. The fluidity of male pioneering society, and the egalitarian ethos it developed, compared to England, favoured the involvement in New Zealand climbing of people from a variety of levels of society. In the process of forming the NZAC in 1891, Ross asked Harper "to consider the advisability (or otherwise) of allowing guides (such as Harry Birley) to become members".<sup>36</sup> Although Harper wanted a middle-class club, he also valued the independence, versatility and adventurous spirit of young New Zealand males. There was no NZAC rule which would bar mountain guides from membership,<sup>37</sup> and a few manual labourers, who also worked as guides, joined the club<sup>38</sup> and thus broadened its membership.

The difficulty was perhaps not so much one of class as doubt about whether those who were paid for guiding should be permitted to join the formal organisation of what was thought to be a recreational pursuit. It was manual workers who were best able to cut steps for tourists and climbers on glaciers or peaks and so it was labourers who became paid guides. A significant development for New Zealand climbing came when a number of young working-class men, whose primary aim was recreational climbing, broke into that activity largely through part-time guiding. These men became guides so that they could climb and they quickly developed a strong desire to climb high. By the 1893-94 season three such men, Tom Fyfe, George Graham and Jack

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<sup>36</sup> Letter Ross to Harper 12 April 1891, loose in SLB

<sup>37</sup> *NZAJ* 1892 p5-7

<sup>38</sup> Membership Record Books NZAC Arch; *NZAJ* 1892-5 membership lists

Clark,<sup>39</sup> were basing themselves at the Hermitage as labourers and part-time guides, and taking part in a variety of paid and unpaid mountaineering. Their own desire to climb made them different from guides in Europe for whom clients were the sole rationale of climbing. In New Zealand there was no possibility of becoming full-time guides because there were few clients, but in guiding the combination of payment and climbing was appealing to young working-class New Zealanders: they could earn money for doing something they enjoyed. With savings from the rest of the year, payment for the assistance they gave to mountain visitors, and for other Hermitage work, enabled them to spend more time in the mountains than other climbers had ever done before or sought to do. They wished to climb as an athletic pursuit, like the climbers of the 1880s. However, in contrast to those pioneers, climbing and associated activities became not a brief holiday recreation but a way of life for months over the summer. With such practice, skills and understanding of the mountain world improved markedly.

These men were manual labourers, and in what was held to be a middle-class recreation they created tensions which were difficult to resolve in the small-scale world of New Zealand climbing. According to Victorian middle-class ideals of sport, paid guides were professional climbers, but in New Zealand the same men were also recreational climbers. Thus amateur or professional status became unclear. Fyfe, Graham and Clark were labourers from small towns in rural South Canterbury who could not afford to climb in the same way as middle-class recreationalists. Tom Fyfe was a fine athlete from Timaru, better educated than the others, with middle-class connections, but by trade a plumber. He first visited the Hermitage in 1890, aged 19, to work on extensions to it. Fyfe was not only impressed by the mountains but attracted towards

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<sup>39</sup> Clark's name is variously spelt Clark and Clarke. He changed the way he spelt his own name about 1900 - G Langton "A Man Named Clark and Clarke" NZAJ 1993 p109-10



climbing them which he began to do at the end of 1892.<sup>40</sup> George Graham was from Waimate, and after some time on lowland farms and mustering in the high country, he came to the Hermitage, probably early in 1893, where no doubt his carpentry skills proved useful.<sup>41</sup> Jack Clark, from Temuka, was the youngest and probably arrived at the Hermitage late in 1893. Initially a general hand and cow-boy, he became enthusiastic about the mountains and was soon guiding visitors onto the glaciers.<sup>42</sup> These young men were the primary activists in a new burst of energy in the Mt Cook region 1894-95 which saw many of the higher peaks climbed for the first time. Other New Zealanders also contributed, as did overseas visitors, but these men, especially Fyfe, were the most significant because of their fitness, experience and attitude. They were in the forefront of New Zealand climbing and could not be ignored or dismissed as of no account, so the middle-class club virtually had to attempt to include these guide-climbers for a time.

It was not just in terms of a broader participation that the young guide-climbers brought a new dimension to New Zealand climbing. They also developed a confidence in their own abilities which the climbers of the 1880s had lacked. Allied with the energy and enthusiasm of youth, this confidence brought a new attitude and vision which placed greater emphasis on the summits and less on exploration. It is doubtful if the slightly older pioneering climbers understood or approved of this new type of climber, whose standards were sometimes seen as far from gentlemanly.<sup>43</sup> The new, brash and energetic approach contrasted with the older, determined and persevering one, but the alpine successes of the former were genuinely applauded, and so small was the number of climbers

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<sup>40</sup> Born 23 June 1870 - J Haynes *Piercing the Clouds Tom Fyfe: First to Climb Mt Cook* Christchurch 1994 p17-32; NZAJ 1953 p282 has 22 June; Ross *Aorangi* p24-31, *Climber* p49. NZAJ 1953 p282-3 and J Wilson p84 incorrect date 1892 for first Hermitage visit.

<sup>41</sup> born 22 February 1869, NZAJ 1977 p122-3; Haynes p63

<sup>42</sup> born 1875, NZAJ 1953 p288-9; Haynes p101-2

<sup>43</sup> Mannering considered Fyfe "an out-and-out rotter" referring to his carelessness with other people's money and property, not his climbing - PC A Anderson 11 January 1994. Malcolm Ross later got on well with Fyfe, but Dixon did not.

that occasionally the two types combined their efforts. Dixon, Mannering and Fyfe attempted Mt Cook in November 1893, and their use of home-made ski, created by Dixon, on the soft snow of the Grand Plateau, showed that it was not only the manual workers who could initiate practical solutions to mountain problems.<sup>44</sup> Otherwise the young guide-climbers had few links with middle-class climbing tradition and formality and climbed in their own combinations or with visitors, often showing great stamina and determination.<sup>45</sup>

The first climax of this new initiative in climbing came on 7 March 1894 when Fyfe showed his fitness, confidence and skill on rock in a solo ascent of Mt Malte Brun (10,520ft),<sup>46</sup> by a route probably equal to some of the rock routes then being climbed in Europe. He made no apology for climbing alone, but there was criticism of him in newspapers and from Malcolm Ross as *NZAJ* editor.<sup>47</sup> The Alpine Club, important to the middle-class climbers, was cited as the ultimate authority but Fyfe was climbing as he wished, which in some ways was well ahead of his time.<sup>48</sup> One striking aspect to this Malte Brun climb was that no doubt at all was expressed about the ascent, a tribute to the standing that Fyfe had already achieved in the mountain climbing world. There was also greater recognition and acceptance of what was possible in climbing than there had been in 1890 when Birley's ascent of Mt Earnslaw was doubted.

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<sup>44</sup> *NZAJ* 1894 p247-57. Photos: J Wilson p96, Temple Castles p44

<sup>45</sup> Ascents: The Footstool (9073ft) 31 January 1894 Fyfe & Graham, in an 18 hour day from the Hermitage (*Press* 14 March 1894 p4; *NZAJ* 1894 p269-75); Mt Montgomery (7660ft) early February 1894 Fyfe & Graham, a climb by chance on the return from an exploratory trip into the Landsborough river (Fyfe MS account Kinsey PP ATL; *Press* 14 March 1894 p4, 2 April 1894 p5); Mt De la Beche (9817ft) 17 February 1894 Fyfe & Graham (*NZAJ* 1894 p275-81; *Press* 2 April 1894 p5); Hochstetter Dome 20 February 1894 Graham & Clark guides to a party (*NZAJ* 1894 p296-7)

<sup>46</sup> *Press* 14 March 1894 p4; *NZAJ* 1894 p258-62

<sup>47</sup> *Press* 14 March 1894 p4, 4 April p6 1894 (reporting NZAC meeting 21 March); *NZAJ* 1894 p258-62,294

<sup>48</sup> Solo climbing has always occurred but did not become generally accepted in New Zealand till the 1970s. Fyfe's ascent of Malte Brun was a rock climb similar to many made in Europe, but comparatively rare in New Zealand where climbers concentrated on snow and ice climbs. Like modern climbers, Fyfe wore rubber-soled shoes on the rock of Mt Malte Brun - *NZAJ* 1894 p260

The New Zealand Alpine Club leaders did appreciate the ability and achievements of these young climbers, and tried to incorporate them in the club. Fyfe and Graham were elected to the NZAC on 23 May 1894 in recognition of their climbing feats earlier that year,<sup>49</sup> with their paid guiding apparently ignored or not an issue. They were not the first guide-climbers to become members of the club for Jack Adamson of the Hermitage had been elected as early as 18 November 1891.<sup>50</sup> However, Harry Birley who had pioneered climbing at the head of Lake Wakatipu was never a member and nor was Jack Clark. Attitudes within the NZAC towards the membership of these guide-climbers seems to have changed after the election of Fyfe and Graham, partly in response to the influence of climbers from overseas.

By the end of the 1893-4 season the young guide-climbers had assumed considerable significance in New Zealand mountain climbing. They had shown clearly that higher standards of skill, fitness and achievement could be reached by people who were prepared to focus single-mindedly on the recreation. They also exemplified a greater variety of ways and styles of climbing. Their guiding threatened to impose a class division on climbing by making a distinction between the amateur, well-off, middle-class climbers, and labourers who became professional climbers. However, their activity broadened climbing and made possible an inclusiveness of participation not seen in England. As both paid guides and recreational climbers the guide-climbers showed how the 'sport' could be available to any young males in New Zealand. Furthermore, their pioneering, do-it-yourself sort of climbing was not too different from that of Mannering, Dixon, Ross and Birley in the 1880s. This suggested the development of an indigenous egalitarian New Zealand version of mountaineering. It had to be expeditionary and exploratory by reason of the lack of 'civilisation' in the mountains, but thanks to Fyfe and Graham it was focused on the summits.

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<sup>49</sup> NZAJ 1894 p368-9

<sup>50</sup> CCFM NZAC Arch; NZAJ 1892 p7-8

## THE PATRONAGE OF VISITING CLIMBERS

At the same time as Fyfe and others were becoming prominent climbers through their own efforts, without belonging to the NZAC, visitors from overseas were also helping to develop New Zealand climbing outside the club. Some of the visitors were tourists, but others had climbing experience and came specifically to climb. The latter developed more technical and route-finding abilities in the New Zealand climbers, and they could extend perceptions of the possible. All the visitors, tourists or climbers, who employed young New Zealanders as guides, helped them to climb. The visitors also emphasised a class difference between those who climbed and employed others to help them, and those who were paid to climb. Thus the visitors were formalising not just a guided climbing pattern, but a distinction between different groups of climbers which had not clearly existed in New Zealand before. Overseas visitors encouraged and stimulated climbing, but their presence also led to tension and conflict. Through the visitors, overseas climbing practices intruded more directly on the New Zealand mountain scene, but the desire of outsiders to 'conquer' New Zealand mountains was challenged by an emerging local nationalism.

An experienced climber visiting the Hermitage could teach the young New Zealand guide-climbers about technique, especially on snow, and could open their eyes to possible climbs and routes. Dr Franz Kronecker from Berlin, who had climbing experience in Europe, was in the Mt Cook area in March 1894, at a key time in the development of the local climbers. Kronecker employed Fyfe and Clark and called them his 'guides', but he set a different example from many English climbers by doing some of the leading and hard work himself. Fyfe had already made some fine climbs on rock, but three climbs with Kronecker on snow and ice significantly expanded the skills and experience of the New Zealanders.<sup>51</sup> By the end of the 1894 season Fyfe, Graham and Clark

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<sup>51</sup> The climbs were: Hochstetter Dome 13 March 1894, Fyfe, Clark & Adamson guides to a party of four including Kronecker; Glacier Peak (attempt) 20 March 1894, Mt Darwin 22 March 1894, Fyfe, Clark & Kronecker - *Press* 2 April 1894 p5; *NZAJ* 1894

had all made great progress in their climbing, but there were many remaining challenges for the following summer. The young guide-climbers had made no attempt of their own on the premier New Zealand peak, Mt Cook, but that was clearly a logical extension of their achievements to that point. The emergence of the guide-climbers had accelerated the natural evolution of climbing skills and again raised hopes that Mt Cook was a realistic goal. This expectation embodied the germ of what might be termed a form of possessive nationalism, a belief that local climbers were worthy of the ultimate physical conquest in the New Zealand mountains and that they should reap the benefits of the previous pioneering. News that an English climber, Edward FitzGerald,<sup>52</sup> was coming to attempt Mt Cook with the famous Swiss/Italian<sup>53</sup> guide Mattias Zurbriggen was publicised in New Zealand in October 1894<sup>54</sup> signifying an imperial threat to local climbing achievement for the 1894-5 season.

Once again, Mt Cook became the focus for climbers that it had been from 1882 to 1890, but now the motivation was nationalistic as well as personal and athletic. Such was the determination of the New Zealanders that their efforts to reach the summit of Mt Cook began on 7 November 1894, well before FitzGerald reached New Zealand. Most of those involved were NZAC members but the organisation of the various attempts came from individual initiative and the composition of the parties sometimes occurred by chance. Mannering, about to be married,<sup>55</sup> was not involved, and Malcolm Ross, lamenting weather and lost opportunity, returned to work in the middle of November.<sup>56</sup> Dixon was a prime mover, believing strongly that Mt Cook could

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p262-9,295-6,341-50; F Kronecker *Wanderungen in Den Sudlichen Alpen Neu-Seelands* Berlin 1898 p80-111

<sup>52</sup> He was born in America but adopted England as his home - Hansen "British Mountaineering" p413,417

<sup>53</sup> *Weekly Press* 4 April 1895 p39-40; *NZAJ* 1957 p162

<sup>54</sup> *NZAJ* 1894 p368; letter sent August, E A FitzGerald *Climbs in the New Zealand Alps* London 1896 p2

<sup>55</sup> Married 22 December 1894, honeymoon at Hermitage. Mannering joined one FitzGerald attempt on Sefton. *Press* 21 January 1895 p2; Mannering *Eighty Years* p68

<sup>56</sup> Letter Ross to J Kinsey 20 Nov 1894 CMA; *NZAJ* 1895 p10

be climbed without foreign guides.<sup>57</sup> He, Fyfe, Graham and Kenneth Ross struggled to get a camp established on the Grand Plateau, and then to actually climb the mountain. In weeks of effort only three real attempts were made.<sup>58</sup> November was extremely early in the climbing season when days were shorter, the snow deep and the weather unsettled. That such efforts were made suggests some desperation among the New Zealand climbers to reach the highest point in their land before the Englishman and his guide.

The pressure revealed some dissension among the New Zealanders, and Fyfe did not show his usual drive and leadership,<sup>59</sup> but the November attempts led to new developments. After the third failure Fyfe took the initiative and began to do something no other climber in New Zealand had done - investigate other possible lines of ascent. Every attempt had followed Green's route up Mt Cook, but Fyfe had the imagination to search for a way on the Hooker or western side of Mt Cook.<sup>60</sup> The imminence of FitzGerald and Zurbriggen was a threat, but Fyfe, like the other New Zealanders, was also ambitious to climb Mt Cook for himself. After a reconnaissance with Adamson, on 20 December 1894 Fyfe and Graham made the greatest climb in New Zealand to that date, reaching the Middle Peak of Cook (12,227ft). But access to the High Peak (12,349ft), half a mile away, was very difficult, so they returned to the Hermitage, somewhat dispirited. Meeting an enthusiastic Clark there gave them new inspiration and from a camp high on the Hooker Glacier the three made an outstanding first ascent of Mt Cook via its difficult north ridge on Christmas Day 1894.<sup>61</sup> This

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<sup>57</sup> NZAJ 1895 p8-9,19

<sup>58</sup> Dixon *Diary* CMA; NZAJ 1895 p5-19; Dixon-Cox correspondence R D Dick PP CMA; Ross *Climber* p78-104 (account written by K Ross); NZAJ 1977 p125; Haynes p103-115

<sup>59</sup> He was perhaps not fully fit, he felt the Linda route was dangerous because of avalanche risk, he preferred rock, and he did not get on well with Dixon, both being very competitive.

<sup>60</sup> ODT 22 January p6, 21 February 1895; NZAJ 1895 p7,19, 1953 p280; J Wilson p92-3; Haynes p115-8

<sup>61</sup> ODT 22 Jan 1895 p6 Graham account, 21 Feb 1895 p2 Fyfe account, mostly reproduced NZAJ 1895 p29-37

was a great climbing achievement at a personal level. More than that, in the public arena the feat of Fyfe, Graham and Clark could be interpreted as a triumphant 'conquest' of the New Zealand landscape by colonial manhood, and an expression of nationalism in the face of an imperial challenge.<sup>62</sup>

FitzGerald represented a form of imperial 'conquest' through climbing, but the success of the New Zealanders on Mt Cook reduced his possible status. His relationship with local mountaineers became difficult because his own purpose could not be fulfilled and his role became unclear. FitzGerald had contacted New Zealand climbers through the NZAC, and at first its members accepted FitzGerald and Zurbriggen, and hoped to be able to climb with them. Zurbriggen, one of the foremost guides in Europe, could certainly have taught all New Zealand climbers a great deal.<sup>63</sup> FitzGerald was elected a member of the NZAC,<sup>64</sup> and publicly expressed opinion also approved of the visitors.<sup>65</sup> However, the reality of FitzGerald which emerged was confusing to New Zealand climbers, and helped bring out into the open difficulties they already had in defining climbers and club membership. New Zealanders looked up to FitzGerald as an experienced English climber and member of the Alpine Club, and they admired his achievements.<sup>66</sup> But the 23 year-old proved to be more of an 'outsider' than might have been expected given his British and AC

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<sup>62</sup> There was public pleasure that New Zealanders had first ascended Mt Cook (*Press* 1 January 1895 p4,5), though a *Press* editorial also considered (1 January 1895 p4) that they should have waited for FitzGerald. The ascent led to no outpouring of patriotic pride, and was overshadowed by the carping of Dixon and the climbs of FitzGerald and Zurbriggen. Later generations of climbers saw the ascent in nationalistic terms - F Du Faur *The Conquest of Mount Cook* London 1915 p20; J Pascoe *Great Days in New Zealand Mountaineering* Wellington 1958 p20-1; Haynes p131

<sup>63</sup> Jack Clark, one of few locals to actually climb with the overseas pair, initially hoped to learn much from them - Letter Clark to J Kinsey 1 February 1895 Kinsey PP CMA

<sup>64</sup> CCFM 5 January 1895

<sup>65</sup> NZAJ 1977 p126 citing *Weekly Press* 3 January 1895

<sup>66</sup> FitzGerald and Zurbriggen made first ascents of Mts Sealy, Silberhorn, Tasman, Haidinger and Sefton (all except Sealy over 10,000 feet), accompanied by Clark on all but Sefton. After FitzGerald left the Hermitage Zurbriggen made a very fast solo ascent of Mt Cook on 14 March 1895, by a new route. Adamson accompanied him to about 10,000ft; Adamson PP NZAC Arch; NZAJ 1895 p38; FitzGerald *Climbs* p325-6; M Zurbriggen *From the Alps to the Andes* London 1899 p172-5

background. In fact he was not a typical late Victorian English climber.<sup>67</sup> To a greater degree than most he climbed for the renown he could achieve by so doing. In the ranges furthest from England, in New Zealand and the Andes, he could find opportunities for self-gratification and self-glorification. There he could also avoid the surveillance of other English climbers and of the Alpine Club, which filtered achievements through its meetings and publications. FitzGerald, who had come half-way round the world to be first up Mt Cook, was not pleased at being narrowly beaten by men whom he regarded very much as his social inferiors.<sup>68</sup> He said he was happy for New Zealanders to be first up Mt Cook,<sup>69</sup> but the way he acted suggested the opposite. Though Zurbriggen led him up a number of difficult peaks, FitzGerald himself never attempted Mt Cook. He was only interested in the glory of first ascents.<sup>70</sup>

FitzGerald seemed to ignore the concept of 'fair play' which was expected of a Victorian sporting gentleman and this was disconcerting and confusing to middle-class New Zealanders. His assumptions of superiority, and expectations of service set him apart and did not endear him to local climbers. Even those of his own social standing he regarded as inferior hangers-on.<sup>71</sup> He exaggerated his own achievements, dismissed the abilities of New Zealand climbers, and treated young Jack Clark, whom he hired as a porter, most unfairly.<sup>72</sup> FitzGerald failed to return photo negatives to Adamson,<sup>73</sup> and

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<sup>67</sup> Clark *Victorian* p217-8,222

<sup>68</sup> He was quoted as saying: "I would rather it had been climbed by a gentleman instead of by a damned plumber!" - Letter M Ross to J Kinsey 12 February 1895 Kinsey PP CMA

<sup>69</sup> NZAJ 1977 p126 citing *Weekly Press* 3 January 1895. On the day Mt Cook was climbed FitzGerald was fishing in the Selwyn river south of Christchurch - FitzGerald *Climbs* p15

<sup>70</sup> *Press* 15 March 1895 p5

<sup>71</sup> Letter M Ross to J Kinsey 12 Feb 1895 Kinsey PP CMA

<sup>72</sup> FitzGerald letter to J Kinsey 18 February 1895 Kinsey PP CMA; FitzGerald hardly mentions the New Zealanders' ascent of Cook and does not refer to Clark's previous climbing, *Climbs* passim & p331. Clark was also taken out of the photo on the summit of Mt Haidinger facing p174; *Weekly Press* 30 October 1897 p12 has original photo including Clark; NZAJ 1993 p109-10



'borrowed' Harper's negatives, permanently, without permission.<sup>74</sup> He returned to England to pose as a great explorer and conqueror. His later claims, together with the exaggerations and inaccuracies in his book, continued and intensified his unpopularity in New Zealand climbing circles.<sup>75</sup> Even the way FitzGerald climbed left New Zealand mountaineers wondering. Thanks to Zurbriggen he reached summits with greater certainty, skill and speed than had been seen in New Zealand before, which was a challenge to the locals' abilities. Indeed Zurbriggen's apparently easy ascent of Mt Cook disconcerted some of the New Zealand climbers who had struggled so laboriously to climb the mountain.<sup>76</sup> The climbing qualities shown and the great achievements had, however, to be weighed against FitzGerald's attitude and 'peak-bagging'. In the end the 'conquest' of New Zealand peaks by visitors from overseas was not entirely acceptable. New Zealanders were also not convinced that employing foreign guides was the way to climb. Furthermore, FitzGerald and Zurbriggen used crampons on snow and ice, which Alpine Club members were not sure about, some viewing the new equipment as hardly sporting.<sup>77</sup>

New Zealanders had clearly heard of crampons by 1894. Dixon wrote:

Previous to the arrival of Mr FitzGerald, we had been led to believe crampons to be unsportsmanlike, and the means employed by foreigners...Had we employed these instruments Mt Cook would not have waited till Xmas Day, 1894, to be topped.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> J Adamson PP NZAC Arch

<sup>74</sup> A P Harper PP NZAC Arch

<sup>75</sup> Adamson & Harper PP NZAC Arch - latter includes scrapbook, statement on FitzGerald and annotated copy of FitzGerald's book; AJ XVII 1894-5 p472-3, XVIII 1896-7 p38-43,190-2,202-5,333-44,482, XIX 1898-9 p158; AJHR 1896 C-1 p xii; Pascoe Douglas p203 - letter Douglas to Harper 5 October 1896

<sup>76</sup> NZAJ 1895 p19,37-8; Letter M Ross to J Kinsey 22 March 1895 Kinsey PP CMA

<sup>77</sup> C Dent *Mountaineering* London 1892 p73; C Wilson *Mountaineering* London 1893 p180-1; AJ Vol XVI & XVII 1893-5. FitzGerald and Zurbriggen used the quite newly developed full-foot crampons. For early crampon use in New Zealand see: G Langton "Means employed by foreigners..." NZAJ 1994 p91-4

<sup>78</sup> NZAJ 1895 p19

This last statement is almost certainly true. Several expeditions had come close to success on Mt Cook, and time saved by not having to cut so many steps would have seen them reach the summit. The irony here is that early New Zealand climbers made efforts to follow the 'rules', both written and unwritten, about what was sporting, and how to climb. The 'rules' were available to New Zealanders through the *Alpine Journal* and books on mountaineering<sup>79</sup> and Harper articulated some of the acceptable practices for the local situation.<sup>80</sup> New Zealand middle-class climbers accepted that aids such as crampons were forbidden, implicitly if not always explicitly. Then came a person like FitzGerald who was more concerned with getting to the top than with the 'rules', and there was uncertainty. He was British but he acted like an unsporting foreigner. Such was the reaction to FitzGerald in New Zealand climbing circles that soon after he left the colony,<sup>81</sup> he was removed from membership of the NZAC in spite of his climbing achievement. The record of his election in January was crossed out with "informal" written alongside, and the minute confirmed on 9 May 1895.<sup>82</sup> This was one AC member who was not acceptable to the NZAC. His presence had, however, helped bring to the surface a number of difficulties in the club. There had been earlier tensions within the NZAC and local rivalries over Mt Cook. These were now compounded by uncertainties over membership of the club, the way climbing might be practised with or without guides, and the place of climbing within society.

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<sup>79</sup> Reviews NZAJ 1892 p112-9 (Dent *Mountaineering*), 1893 p231-3 (Wilson *Mountaineering*)

<sup>80</sup> NZAJ 1893 p210-20

<sup>81</sup> 8 April 1895 from Bluff, FitzGerald *Climbs* p335-6

<sup>82</sup> CCFM NZAC Arch

## THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NEW ZEALAND ALPINE CLUB

Climbing developed considerably as a local New Zealand recreation in the 1890s and the New Zealand Alpine Club contributed to much of the progress, in spite of the difficulties and limitations of its membership. Both the NZAC and its individual members tried to increase the number of climbers and they sought out a greater variety of mountain regions. The club specifically aimed to publicise climbing activity among both mountaineers and the wider society, and this was done through meetings, photography, newspaper accounts of climbs and the publication of the *New Zealand Alpine Journal* twice a year. The NZAC sought to make direct links not just with the Alpine Club in England, but with other alpine clubs around the world. However, members of the NZAC were also very aware of differences between climbing in New Zealand and elsewhere, especially in the European Alps, and they noted with pride the development of an indigenous sort of climbing. New Zealand climbing did not depend just on visitors but had a life of its own within the colony, and after the successes of 1894, both climbing and the club seemed poised for greater popularity and achievement.

The publication of material on climbing and New Zealand mountains, was, to the middle-class climbers, a validation of their chosen recreation. Wider public knowledge of the mountains and of climbing helped create a context for the development of both climbing and the New Zealand Alpine Club. Acceptance and recognition by the wider society was essential both for climbing as a recreation and for its middle-class practitioners who formed and led the club. Much of New Zealand society in the later years of the nineteenth century was no longer pioneering, but the ethos of the independent, tough and capable pioneer remained. Sports which took people out of the urban setting, such as hunting, fishing, walking and climbing could be seen as attempts to find adventure in the face of the restrictions of a more settled society. Achievement of summits and exploration was usually to be praised as 'conquest' of the

natural world. The working-class climbers were obvious exponents of adventure and pioneering, yet, ironically, public opinion mattered little to them.

There was much greater publicity for both climbing and the mountains in the 1890s which the NZAC encouraged where it could. The use of a variety of media gave the public greater knowledge of both the sport and the more remote mountain landscape, and also some vicarious involvement in mountaineering. The first pictorial stamp series produced for New Zealand in 1898 featured six mountain scenes,<sup>83</sup> indicating that the beauty of the landscape was perceived as one of New Zealand's attractions. Mountain scenery also became more generally known through photographs in published albums<sup>84</sup> and in illustrated newspapers such as *The Weekly Press* and the *Otago Witness* from later in the 1890s.<sup>85</sup> Climbers supported the development of tourism into mountain areas, and the work of surveyors and photographers who recorded and enhanced knowledge of the mountains. Advertisement for mountains and climbing also came through achievement, which made a visitor such as FitzGerald very acceptable. He could publicise New Zealand climbing both locally and overseas.<sup>86</sup> At a personal level, NZAC members encouraged relatives, friends and acquaintances to take up climbing.<sup>87</sup> Apart from club meetings in Christchurch, they sought to reach a wider group through displays, lectures and lantern slide shows of the mountains, exploration and actual

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<sup>83</sup> *The "Len Jury" 1989 Catalogue of New Zealand Stamps* Auckland p2

<sup>84</sup> For example: *Pictorial New Zealand* London 1895; *The Imperial Album of New Zealand Scenery* Wellington & Christchurch 1896-9

<sup>85</sup> A fine example was a major feature on "Mount Cook and its Glaciers" in *The Weekly Press* Special Christmas Number 30 October 1897. This included 75 photographs taken in the Mt Cook area, supported by an extensive text written by Joseph and May Kinsey.

<sup>86</sup> Letter M Ross to J Kinsey 6 March 1895 Kinsey PP CMA

<sup>87</sup> *Manning Eighty Years* p57-70 (some of those mentioned were involved in the NZAC and climbing); *Harper Memories* p65. Few friends and relations took up sustained mountain activity.

climbing.<sup>88</sup> They felt the general public needed to be made more aware of the mountains and several climbers wrote articles for newspapers or produced books about their activities. Climbers sometimes contributed to other publications, such as guide-books, which included the New Zealand mountains.<sup>89</sup>

Public opinion, as expressed in newspapers, might also support climbing. In February 1891 the *Otago Daily Times* encouraged the formation of a New Zealand alpine club, not just for the sake of climbing but to help advertise alpine scenery.<sup>90</sup> Later when there was more actual climbing, the same paper supported safe mountaineering because it brought out the "British" qualities of "endurance, pluck, enterprise" and helped develop a sense of beauty.<sup>91</sup> The *Press* praised the fine climbs early in 1894, noted the importance and interest of mountain photographs, and pronounced itself in favour of mountaineering because of "the mental and physical benefits derived from the pursuit."<sup>92</sup> No attempt was made to specify the supposed benefits, though there was an awareness that improved access to the mountains would help develop the sport and thus presumably increase the benefits, whatever they were. The newly prominent guide-climbers had a fairly straightforward view of what they were trying to achieve in the mountains - reach the summits - but such a narrow self-centred view was difficult for society to accept. However, with others such as AP Harper focusing on mountain activity which might be useful to society, and extolling the qualities it developed, the public interpretation of climbing could differ from what climbers were actually doing and thinking.

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<sup>88</sup> *Press* 7 & 8 June 1893 p4&5, *NZAJ* 1893 p235-6, 1894 p298-9,366-8, 1895 p140

<sup>89</sup> M Ross *Lakes of Central Otago* 1889, *Aorangi* 1892, *West Coast Sounds* 1892; *Mannering With Axe* 1891; *The Taranaki Holiday Guide Book* 1891; *NZAJ* 1892-6; Harper *Pioneer Work* 1896

<sup>90</sup> *ODT* 21 February 1891 sub-editorial p2

<sup>91</sup> *ODT* 15 April 1893 p2

<sup>92</sup> *Press* 14 March 1894 p4

Not only was there more public knowledge in the 1890s of the mountains and of leisure opportunities in that setting, but there was also much more mountain recreation. Only a small proportion was alpine climbing, but a number of mountains and mountain regions saw increased popularity. The physical activity in the mountains, by both tourists and recreationalists, was often energetic, though it is best described as walking and scrambling rather than climbing. Some places, such as Egmont,<sup>93</sup> the Mt Cook region,<sup>94</sup> and the Milford Track<sup>95</sup> saw much greater intrusion of 'civilisation' further and higher into the mountains, in the forms of roads, tracks, guides and accommodation. The central North Island volcanoes of Ruapehu-Tongariro which had seldom been visited previously for recreation, slowly became established as a site for summer tourism and adventure.<sup>96</sup> The NZAC did not stimulate most of this activity, but the club supported any development in the mountains which might improve access or services.

Climbing also became more common in the South Island away from the Hermitage. Harry Birley, the pioneer of the 1880s, was no longer the only guide at the head of Lake Wakatipu and there was also independent activity on Mt Earnslaw.<sup>97</sup> Claims and counter claims about the difficulty of the ascent showed some ignorance of the mountains, and among people who seldom climbed there was little awareness of how rapidly mountain conditions could change.<sup>98</sup> The pioneer climbers in Canterbury were also beginning to look to other mountains. Marmaduke Dixon, his brother and AP Harper went to Arthur's Pass late in 1891, hoping to climb Mt Rolleston (7453ft). Cloud foiled two

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<sup>93</sup> Scanlan *Egmont Story* p58-60,73-4

<sup>94</sup> *AJHR* C-1 1890-99

<sup>95</sup> Anderson *Milford Trails* p40-6,52-5,60-5

<sup>96</sup> The Desert Road to the east was completed in 1893 (*AJHR* C-1 1893 p10,50, 1894 p41). The gift of 6518 acres by Te Heuhehu Tukino and his people to the Crown in 1887 became Tongariro National Park in 1894 - Cowan p29-33; Grace p461,497-501

<sup>97</sup> *ODT* 19 January 1895 p3; D McKenzie *Road to Routeburn* Dunedin 1973 p48

<sup>98</sup> *Press* 14 March 1893; *ODT* 1893: 8 April Supp p1, 11 April p3, 13 April p3

attempts, but a lesser peak was ascended.<sup>99</sup> George Mannering attempted Mt Rolleston on Boxing Day 1891 and, in thick mist, reached a summit later found to be the Low Peak, with the High Peak invisible further on.<sup>100</sup> More adventurous still, Mannering attempted Mt Arrowsmith (9171ft) at Easter 1893, from the Cameron valley in South Canterbury.<sup>101</sup> Malcolm Ross was funded by two Melbourne newspapers to attempt Mt Tutoko (9042ft) in Fiordland. This was the first commercially sponsored climbing expedition in New Zealand but the mountain they attempted in April 1895 was not Tutoko, illustrating the difficulty of climbing before sufficient exploration had been done. Furthermore Ross and others claimed an ascent of Tutoko, though no summit was reached, and their attempted mountain, later named Mt Madeline, was lower. This raised issues of judgement and trust which could not easily be resolved at this early stage of New Zealand mountain climbing.<sup>102</sup>

Record-keeping and education were two purposes of the NZAC which the *New Zealand Alpine Journal*, published from March 1892, helped to fulfil. In its journal, the club sought to record present mountain exploration and recreation and to collect and preserve relevant activity of the past. Within the limits of its restricted distribution, this journal shared topographical knowledge and mountain achievement. Occasionally leading members of the club tried to help others with their climbing through articles on equipment and techniques.<sup>103</sup> Copies of the journal were sent to overseas alpine clubs in exchange for their journals, to present another aspect of New Zealand to the wider world. The

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<sup>99</sup> 8 November, named Philistine after one of Dixon's horses - *NZAJ* 1892 p55-6; Harper *Memories* p67

<sup>100</sup> *NZAJ* 1892 p99-112. His companions on the climb were Arthur Ollivier and Derisley Wood.

<sup>101</sup> *NZAJ* 1893 p142-52. His companions, Malcolm Lean and Charles Inglis, were both, then or later, his brothers-in-law - *Eighty Years* p39,58

<sup>102</sup> *AJ* XVII 1894-5 p559; *NZAJ* 1895 p136-9, 1896 p172-80; M Ross *A Climber* p236-56; *Lyttelton Times* 25 & 30 March 1919; K Ross "The Age-Argus...Expedition to Fiordland" Typescript 1953 CMA

<sup>103</sup> *NZAJ* 1892 "New Zealand Alpine Equipment" p49-54, 1893 "Hints on Mountaineering"

colonial climbers were trying to ensure that their peaks and climbing were recognised by the mountaineering world. There was also the hope that more overseas climbers might be attracted to New Zealand, which would further validate colonial climbing.<sup>104</sup>

Not only did New Zealand climbers make links with the wider climbing community, but they compared climbing in New Zealand with the activity elsewhere, especially in Europe where much of the activity of the Alpine Club was still centred. Some NZAC members, especially Harper, had knowledge of the relative 'civilisation' to be found in the European Alps. It was clear that climbing in New Zealand was different from much of the climbing in Europe. Not only were there few guides and tracks, and little accommodation, in the New Zealand mountains, but the difficulties began at a lower altitude and the climbing was more expeditionary. Harper felt that the freedom from 'civilisation' to be experienced in the New Zealand mountains gave them greater appeal. Reflecting a developing national feeling, New Zealand climbers were convinced that the greater difficulty of access and exploration gave colonial mountaineering much greater worth than the Mother Country's climbing in Europe.<sup>105</sup> A native New Zealand version of climbing was beginning to develop.

## A FALSE DAWN IN CLIMBING

Despite this flowering of the New Zealand Alpine Club and of local mountaineering between 1890 and 1895, the New Zealand climbing world was beset by problems, and this period was something of a false dawn in the development of alpine climbing. The club ceased to function during 1896-7 and

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<sup>104</sup> NZAJ 1892 p120, 1893 p169-70,238, 1894 p299-302,366, 1895 p61,130-1; SLB NZAC Arch

<sup>105</sup> NZAJ 1893 p134-42



from late 1895 to the end of the century there was very little high climbing.<sup>106</sup> The reasons for the demise of club and climbing were varied. The club failed as a mountaineering community since not all climbers were allowed to join and people could climb without belonging to it. The idea of climbing had been established, but no long term system or organisation for encouraging new climbers was set up. The Hermitage, a key centre of climbing, had technically been closed in the summer 1894-5, and its future remained uncertain. Heavy snow falls and poor weather limited climbing in 1895-6, when further progress might have been expected. Personality clashes in the small membership affected the club which non-climbers came to dominate. A number of key members of the club and significant practitioners of climbing moved away from the South Island, some to concentrate on employment, and no more overseas climbers came to stimulate the recreation. In spite of the publicity they generated for their recreation, NZAC members failed to convince the public of the merits of mountaineering.

The idea of climbing, the existence and beauty of mountains, and access to them, did not in themselves inspire a desire for climbing adventure. The qualities needed in climbing, such as courage in the face of danger, and the attributes developed by climbing, such as physical and mental toughness, while admirable in themselves, did not make it an attractive leisure pursuit for most people. So the wider society remained ambivalent about climbing and at times expressed doubt about its validity, putting pressure on its proponents to defend their recreation. Climbers were always open to criticism for pursuing such an apparently dangerous activity at risk of their own lives and their families' welfare.<sup>107</sup> A sub-editorial in the *Otago Daily Times* condemned Birley's solo first ascent of Earnslaw as "the work...of a madman", considering that "It would be a thousand pities for our youths to become impressed with the notion

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<sup>106</sup> The only high climbs between those of FitzGerald and 1903 were two by Fyfe and M Ross in 1897: 30 January north peak of Mt Haidinger, 9 February Mt De la Beche and the Minarets - *AJHR* 1898 C-1 p113; *Ross Climber* p144-57,173-77

<sup>107</sup> *Mannering With Axe* p16; *Harper Memories* p65; *NZAJ* 1892 p9-10

that glory or nobility attaches to the wanton risking of life, in the absence of a worthy object."<sup>108</sup> Climbing of this sort seemed to contribute nothing to society at a time when individual and social discipline was expected, not foolhardiness or independence.<sup>109</sup>

The response of climbers was to stress the character-forming nature of climbing and the enjoyment experienced by climbers was down-played. Most accounts of climbs were factual narrative, with occasional rhapsodies about the view. Non-climbers could not comprehend, and indeed they were hardly allowed to comprehend, the excitement and self-satisfaction gained through the encounter with risk in mountain climbing and the achievement of summits. Instead, the qualities more desired in the wider community were stressed, such as the betterment of society through individual improvement. Another aspect commonly emphasised was the hard physical effort which climbing demanded of its proponents, and there was no denying the improved fitness which climbing brought. The word 'work' was sometimes used<sup>110</sup> to stress the physical nature of climbing and it could imply that 'conquest' of the landscape was an ordinary everyday task. However, the word also posed a potential conceptual problem. To the middle-class of the Victorian era, sport and work were quite separate, though one could be valuable to the other. The use of the word 'work' did divert attention from the self-centred and gratuitous nature of recreational climbing by glossing over the difference between mountain exploration and mountain climbing. The former was possibly useful to society, but the latter much less obviously so. AP Harper was the one who most stressed the usefulness of mountaineering as further exploration and recording of the

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<sup>108</sup> ODT 15 April 1893 p2, though the same writer also saw positive aspects in climbing

<sup>109</sup> On narrower moral grounds climbers were also criticised for pursuing their pastime on a Sunday - Harper *Memories* p65-6. The Christchurch Presbytery attacked Bishop Julius for allowing the possibility of mountaineering on Sunday - *Lyttelton Times* 9 March 1893 p3. In 1910-11 Julius' daughter Ada became the first New Zealand woman to climb peaks over 10,000ft.

<sup>110</sup> *Mannering With Axe* p42; Harper "Alpine Work in Switzerland and New Zealand" NZAJ 1893 p134; *Pioneer Work in the Alps of New Zealand* 1896. Harper was still using the word many years later: radio talk June 1949, RNZSA D2099

natural world. He might have blurred the distinction between recreation and work, but for the fact that after 1892 he was little interested in climbing and his main focus was on exploration. By the mid-1890s others such as FitzGerald, and even Fyfe in spite of his guiding, had made it clear that climbing was a sporting recreation.

The small number of climbers reflected the limited acceptance of climbing in society, and issues of identity and membership were always of concern to the NZAC. Not only did that body develop a narrow definition of who a club climber might be, but it failed to provide for novice climbers and women. The club also had difficulty maintaining membership which suggests it was not fulfilling its original purposes. As early as 1893 club leaders were concerned about the number of resignations and the failure of members to renew their subscriptions.<sup>111</sup> Membership was comparatively expensive for those who were not middle class. In a time of depression and much unemployment or part time work, when the weekly wage for an unskilled or skilled worker was about £2 per week,<sup>112</sup> the subscription was high at one guinea for a member and half a guinea for a subscriber.<sup>113</sup> On financial grounds alone the club was for the well-off, but its attitudes towards climbing and guiding also failed to include the working-class climbers. They were a minority of club members and climbers but provided the recreation with much of its energy in the 1890s. The Qualifications Committee of the club seems to have changed its policy to prevent those who guided from joining the NZAC. There was no formal decision taken on this, but the example of FitzGerald and his guide perhaps helped confirm that the NZAC, like the AC, was for amateur climbers only, and people who both guided and climbed were not wanted. By May 1895 Tom Fyfe was no longer a member and George Graham only during that year.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> SLB NZAC Arch

<sup>112</sup> *Press* 11 May 1894: editorial p4 suggests a normal wage of 7s per day; *New Zealand Official 1990 Year Book* Wellington 1990 p378 - 1895 figures

<sup>113</sup> *NZAJ* 1892 p7

<sup>114</sup> List of members *NZAJ* 1895 p66-7

Since there were very few active climbers in New Zealand at all,<sup>115</sup> such a restriction not only imposed a class division but reduced the chances of an active and enthusiastic membership. The club chose to be elitist and excluded the best climbers because they had guided.

A lack of cohesion in the NZAC was also created by other tensions and problems stemming from personality clashes and different views of climbing. Numbers were so small there was no room to hide personal differences, or to make them part of wider debate, as occurred in England. At the centre of much dissension was Marmaduke Dixon. As secretary of the NZAC in 1893-4 he had annoyed some members.<sup>116</sup> There had been local rivalry in attempts to be first to ascend Mt Cook, and Dixon had tried to impose gentlemanly compacts on other climbers.<sup>117</sup> The failed attempts on Mt Cook in late 1894 created differences of opinion both at the time and later when Dixon wrote about them.<sup>118</sup> After the success of Fyfe, Graham and Clark, a possibly jealous Dixon seemed to want to denigrate their efforts.<sup>119</sup> In addition to the personal and possible class differences, regional rivalry was created as climbers in South Canterbury and Otago took offence at the Canterbury leadership of the club, especially Dixon. Some southern climbers considered the formation of a separate club because of the apparent Christchurch dominance.<sup>120</sup> There was

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<sup>115</sup> 38 members and 35 subscribers were listed *NZAJ* May 1895 p66-7. About 10 were New Zealanders who climbed for recreation. Most others had only a general or past interest in the mountains, not climbing.

<sup>116</sup> Notably Malcolm Ross Editor *NZAJ* - LBE NZAC Arch; letter Ross to J Kinsey 28 February 1895 Kinsey PP CMA

<sup>117</sup> Dixon Diary CMA copy? of note to Fyfe 29 Nov 1894; Ross *Climber* p52-3; Haynes p51,104,115

<sup>118</sup> Dixon-Cox correspondence R D Dick PP CMA (On 2 January 1895 Dixon threatened to travel to Timaru and punch Cox's head); *NZAJ* 1895 p5-19 & *Weekly Press* 11 July 1895 p12,15; Letter Clark to J Kinsey 15 August 1895 Kinsey PP CMA; Letter T C Fyfe M Ross G Graham K Ross N K Cox to Editor *NZAJ* (copy Ross to J Kinsey 18 Sept 1895 Kinsey PP CMA), reply Mannering to Ross 14 October 1895 SLB; Ross *Climber* p81-103

<sup>119</sup> *Press* 1895: 4 January p4, 21 January p3, 28 January p3 (all repeated in *Weekly Press* 10,24,31 January p8,34,35); letter M Ross to J Kinsey 22 March 1895 Kinsey PP CMA

<sup>120</sup> letter M Ross to J Kinsey 6 March 1895 Kinsey PP CMA; Dr N K Cox letters - R D Dick PP CMA

also disturbance over other matters, such as the lack of recognition for Bessie Ross acting editor of the *NZAJ* in 1894,<sup>121</sup> Fyfe and Graham's refusals to produce an account of their climb of Mt Cook for the *NZAJ*,<sup>122</sup> and Malcolm Ross's excessive claims with regard to Mt Tutoko in 1895.<sup>123</sup>

An emerging problem was that climbers were increasingly irritated by non-climbers. The latter were tending to dominate the club but gave it little recreational energy and did not really understand climbing.<sup>124</sup> Non-climbers felt exploration was more important than reaching the summits and they did not see New Zealand climbing as being self-sufficient. They expected visitors to continue to provide impetus and motivation for climbing in New Zealand,<sup>125</sup> but no more overseas climbers came, perhaps because FitzGerald implied he had climbed everything worth climbing.<sup>126</sup> Neither did New Zealand provide the adventures many skilled overseas climbers were seeking, such as guideless climbing on known mountains and harder rock routes on which specialised skills were required.<sup>127</sup> The challenges for climbers in Europe, including a few Englishmen such as Mummery and Slingsby, were being sought on lowland rock, on new rock routes in the Alps where the summit was not the aim, and on peaks in other places, such as Norway, the Caucasus and South America.

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<sup>121</sup> Bessie Ross may have resigned from the club over this in mid-1895 - Membership Record Books NZAC Arch; Letter Mannering to M Ross SLB 19 July 1895 "Mrs Ross's resignation will be received with much regret"; Letters Ross to J Kinsey 26 February, 6, 22 March 1895 Kinsey PP CMA; LBE 1893-5. She acted as editor while Malcolm was twice overseas in 1894.

<sup>122</sup> *NZAJ* editor Meeson was forced to reprint Fyfe's *ODT* account - LBE NZAC Arch; *NZAJ* 1895 p29-37

<sup>123</sup> *ODT* 14 May 1895 p7; *AJ* XVII 1894-5 p559; *NZAJ* 1895 p136-9, 1896 p172-80

<sup>124</sup> LBE 1895; Lists of office-bearers *NZAJ* 1895 p66, 1896 p195. John Meeson, editor *NZAJ* and President of NZAC was one non-climber who took on significant roles in the club.

<sup>125</sup> *NZAJ* 1895 p4

<sup>126</sup> FitzGerald *passim*; Harper PP NZAC Arch; *AJ* XVII 1895 p469-75, XVIII 1896-7 p38-43, 69-84, 202-5, 333-48; G Abraham *The Complete Mountaineer* 1907, London 1923 p23

<sup>127</sup> Traditional AC members considered this to be mere rock gymnastics.

Climbing was even beginning in the Himalaya where altitude posed a new problem to go with the exploration needed.<sup>128</sup> New Zealand mountains seemed small and uninteresting in comparison.

The successful ascents of Mt Cook possibly did lessen the drive to reach major summits in New Zealand. The greatest had been achieved and so every peak was within reach. Actual climbing was also restricted in the winter of 1895 by very heavy snowfalls, and in the summer 1895-6, by the snow and poor weather which prevented most climbing.<sup>129</sup> The interest and skills built up over the previous few seasons could not be consolidated. Uncertainty over the Hermitage in 1895-6 also limited visitors to the Mt Cook region. Use of the Hermitage had been in jeopardy from September 1894 when the company decided to discontinue business.<sup>130</sup> There were no longer jobs at the Hermitage for people like Fyfe, Graham and Clark which reduced the possibility of them continuing to climb as actively as in 1893-4. Eventually, on 6 July 1895, the government, under pressure from those interested in the mountains and tourism, agreed to buy the Hermitage and 29 acres for £900. This was completed on 11 September and Adamson appointed caretaker.<sup>131</sup> But there was no policy for developing tourism at the Hermitage and climbing was not an activity for the government to organise. A guide was usually employed in the later 1890s, but his main purpose was low level trips not mountain climbing,<sup>132</sup> and the Hermitage was no longer the climbing centre it had been.

Many of the previously active climbers no longer had easy access to the Hermitage or the same drive to climb. A number of those prominent in

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<sup>128</sup> Engel *Mountaineering in the Alps* p139-41,146; F Keenlyside *Peaks and Pioneers* London 1975 p47,49,55

<sup>129</sup> NZAJ 1895 p131-3, 1896 p194

<sup>130</sup> Gillespie p284; letter Adamson to J Kinsey 31 January 1895 Kinsey PP CMA

<sup>131</sup> *Press* 1895: 15 January p4, 15 March p5; Letters Kinsey PP CMA; NZAJ 1895 p134; AJHR C-1 1896 p20

<sup>132</sup> There was no guide 1895-6, Fyfe 1896-7, Clark thereafter, summer employment only.

climbing and the NZAC moved further from the mountains, or decided not to climb, and this destroyed the NZAC and markedly reduced climbing activity. George Graham married, decided not to climb in the 1895-6 season, and went to the North Island to break in a bush section near Eketahuna.<sup>133</sup> Harper moved to Thames in 1896 to practise as a lawyer,<sup>134</sup> and Ross went to Wellington that year.<sup>135</sup> Mannering shifted on promotion to a Hastings branch of the Union Bank in July 1897.<sup>136</sup> Some club officers also left New Zealand. The *NZAJ* editor of 1896, M G C Pasco, was suddenly transferred from Dunedin to Australia in April that year, just when he felt he was about to accomplish something in the mountains.<sup>137</sup> John Meeson, formerly editor and elected President in February 1896, who had worked hard to smooth troubled waters in the club, also moved overseas in 1896.<sup>138</sup> There were no longer enough active or keen people for a club to function. Mannering continued to be interested and wished the club could be re-organised in Wellington, but this was a vain hope and, in December 1897, Mannering proposed the winding up of the Club.<sup>139</sup>

By then the club had ceased to have any corporate life and there was virtually no high climbing. The years 1890-95 had been promising for both climbing and the New Zealand Alpine Club, but a sufficient basis had not yet been laid for either to be sustained long term. Club and climbing had progressed rapidly from 1891 to 1895 but the development of both depended on a small number of active members and climbers who were themselves busy people, often occupied with developing careers. Initially the hope was that the club would be

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<sup>133</sup> Letter Clark to J Kinsey 15 August 1895 Kinsey PP CMA; *NZAJ* 1977 p126

<sup>134</sup> Harper *Memories* p131-2

<sup>135</sup> List of NZAC members 12 August 1896 SLB

<sup>136</sup> Mannering *Eighty Years* p71

<sup>137</sup> *NZAJ* 1896 p194-5, 1953 p278; Correspondence J S Shanks - Pasco (in Queensland) 1933-1952 NZAC Arch

<sup>138</sup> LBE 1895; Mannering to P Marshall 24 June 1896 SLB

<sup>139</sup> SLB 1896-7

all-inclusive of climbers and others interested in the mountains. However, there were difficulties determining the place, in the club and in climbing, of beginners, women, working-class men and overseas climbers, and in time the club determined to be a middle-class male-dominated institution. Only the young, guide-climbers were able for a few years to give sufficient commitment to the recreation to enable progress to be made, but in the end they were excluded from the club. No cohesive group whose members, supported each other in mountain recreation, was created through club or climbing, which meant that by 1896 neither really existed in New Zealand.

Yet the decade of the 1890s was a significant period for the development of recreational climbing. Both the actual feats on mountains, which were considerable, and the brief existence of the New Zealand Alpine Club created a record and tradition of climbing which gained some acceptance for the sport in the wider society. New Zealanders had been responsible for many of the achievements and on their pioneering efforts and example in climbing and guiding, future activity could be based. Some proponents of climbing in the 1890s were to have further parts to play after the turn of the century. But it was not individuals or club, but the state which was to assume a leading role in future climbing. The government, through its ownership of the Hermitage, development of infrastructures, and encouragement of tourism, extended 'civilisation' further into the most significant mountain region of New Zealand, and re-established climbing on a new basis.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOCIETY AND ITS AGENCIES: GOVERNMENT AND GUIDES 1900-1920

In the nineteenth century the history of mountain climbing in New Zealand was a history of individual enthusiasm and effort, often separate from the main trends of society and even in opposition to them. However, in the early twentieth century society reached out into the mountain zone in ways which benefited climbers. Between 1893 and 1912 the Liberal government encouraged activity which brought people into closer proximity to the mountains and through this promoted the emergence of the mountain guide. In this creation a particular kind of climbing world was established, based on the nineteenth century model of English guided climbing in Europe. The strengthening influence in the mountains of the state and of overseas climbers combined to establish the mountain guide as the typical New Zealand mountain climber from 1900.

### TOURISM IN THE MOUNTAINS

Mountain tourism developed after 1900 as a legitimate leisure time pursuit for a more wealthy and expanding society. This tourism became the new basis for climbing, replacing the individual and club efforts of the 1890s. For many travellers and holidaymakers in mountain areas, the alpine environment was a source of rest, relaxation and refreshment. The sights to be seen were the principal motivation for excursions to the mountain region. The contrast with ordinary urban life and business was also important, and mild activity might bring increased fitness and improved health. Visits to the mountains were supported by greater affluence in the 'middling' class who sought recreation further afield than the expanding urban setting. Tourists who wished to reach the mountain fringe of 'civilised' society were aided by improved access, and in the mountains services for tourists and climbers were steadily improved.

The contrast between the populous and organised urban world of towns and cities and the more remote natural landscape encouraged some tourism into the mountains. Although the proportion of New Zealanders living in the four main cities did not rise greatly, the actual population of those cities nearly doubled from 226,001 in 1901 to 443,170 in 1921,<sup>1</sup> and many smaller towns grew significantly. In the urban centres there came to be less physical activity in daily life as jobs became more sedentary and public transport assumed greater importance in larger cities.<sup>2</sup> There was general acceptance of a more comfortable and settled urban life which made it unlikely that many people would look outside that world for stimulation and adventure. The well-off did sometimes venture as tourists to an edge of 'civilisation' at the foot of the mountains for a time, but this was temporary and urban life remained the accepted norm. If urban life was seen as increasingly complex and unhealthy, then there were many possible leisure pursuits which might provide a healthy 'time-out' from cares and problems. Tourism was one form of recreation which was increasingly well-publicised, but climbing hardly existed in New Zealand at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Leisure activity in society provided a background for both tourism and climbing. Physical exercise, especially outdoors, was perceived as beneficial, and could take many forms depending on a person's age, gender, interests and income. The most public recreational developments were in the predominantly male team sports. Virtually everywhere the sporting community became important, explicitly for the improved physical fitness and group cohesiveness it led to, and implicitly as one means of disciplining and controlling the males within society to the benefit, it was hoped, of the family and society as a whole.<sup>3</sup> Rugby in particular assumed a prominent place in society to become,

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<sup>1</sup> *Oxford History* Table 6 p254

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford History* p216,253

<sup>3</sup> J Phillips "Mummy's Boys: Pakeha Men and Male Culture in New Zealand" in P Bunkle & B Hughes eds *Women in New Zealand Society* Auckland 1980 p224-232; *Oxford History* p257-8,277-8; J Phillips *A Man's Country?* Auckland 1987 p86-130

from the 1905 All Black tour of Britain, a centre of nationalistic ambition. Other team sports such as soccer and hockey also became more organised and popular. The strong emphasis on group activity perhaps limited individual initiative, but it was not just the team sports which were favoured. Other recreations became more common, such as golf and tennis, which were social rather than team in nature. The widest variety of leisure-time activity was available to those who were well-off, and they were the ones who could travel for recreation. Some people holidayed in a natural environment, by the sea or in the bush. The mountain environment could provide even greater aesthetic pleasures, but the hard work and risk needed to gain summits was attractive to few recreationalists.

Tourists sought pleasant, beautiful or awe-inspiring sights to admire. Mountain visits for this purpose had occurred from at least as early as the 1870s, and after 1900 they became increasingly acceptable and frequent. In particular tourists wished to visit glaciers, which were most conveniently reached from the Hermitage near Mt Cook. Hundreds of people visited that region in the early twentieth century,<sup>4</sup> and their requirements encouraged the growth of a mountain guiding service. They not only wanted to see the outstanding features of the natural world, but also to experience them. Tourists sought mild adventure within their capabilities, in the somewhat strange mountain environment which gave a thrill of excitement mixed with fear of the unknown. They needed assistance to enable them to venture away from the Hermitage itself, whatever their purpose or activity. Guides were the intermediaries between the tourists and the mountains, their knowledge 'taming' the latter and bringing them within human cognition. Aided by guides, visitors could be reasonably energetic, and might be prepared to put time and effort into reaching Malte Brun Hut up the Tasman glacier in order to see mountain sights

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<sup>4</sup> Visits by parties from Government House gave a sort of 'royal' blessing to mountain tourism - *AJHR* H-2 1902 p17,19, 1903 xiv

from closer at hand.<sup>5</sup> A few people went further to ascend easy peaks and they helped develop glacier guiding into mountain guiding. For most people, however, the summits were still a view rather than a setting for recreation.

Tourism was costly, which made it an exclusive activity, and so most tourists were from the upper strata of urban society or from overseas. There was significant improvement in the New Zealand economy from 1895,<sup>6</sup> but this did not help everyone. Wage-earners benefited little from the increased prosperity and there remained a considerable number of unemployed.<sup>7</sup> Great wealth in New Zealand was to be found among the owners of large sheep stations and the 'haute bourgeoisie'.<sup>8</sup> Interest in travel led some of them to holiday in the mountains, but tourists increasingly came from the 'middling' class, especially the professionals, and visitors from overseas showed a similar pattern. At this level economic improvement led to more disposable income which might be devoted to travel or leisure time spent in the mountains.<sup>9</sup> Transport costs made up a significant part of the expense involved in mountain tourism. The distances to be travelled to reach the mountains were considerable and the cost was commensurate. A return journey from Christchurch or Dunedin to the Hermitage, using rail and coach, cost between £4 and £5 in 1906, and further south travelling to the Lake Wakatipu mountain areas was not cheap either.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It was a 4-7 hour walk on the glacier to the hut which had been built by the government in 1898 as a viewpoint for energetic tourists and a climbing base for Hochstetter Dome - *AJHR* 1898 C-1 p84

<sup>6</sup> *Oxford History* p226

<sup>7</sup> *Oxford History* p207,226. A skilled worker in 1905 would earn £3 or a little more per week - *New Zealand Official 1990 Yearbook* p378

<sup>8</sup> *Oxford History* p305-6

<sup>9</sup> *Oxford History* p268,271,306. Both men and women travelled, but social attitudes ensured that economic power and recreational freedom remained largely male preserves and the initiative for mountain tourism often lay with men

<sup>10</sup> "Tourist Resorts of the Colony" - Unknown newspaper May 1906 WAK p4-5; R J Meyer *All Aboard* Wellington 2nd ed 1980 p83,96. Hotel charges had to be added to transport costs at a rate of 10s per day.

In the mountains costs for tourists were also high. Accommodation to tourist standard was not cheap. Anyone who wished be an active rather than a passive tourist, or to be a climber, had to be prepared to hire guides, porters, equipment and horses. Climbers incurred further expense through their need to spend time in the mountains, in order to acquire sufficient fitness and wait out bad weather. In 1906 the Hermitage charged:

10s per day for the first week and 8s per day afterwards. The guiding fees for...the higher climbs 40s per day for one person and 60s...for two...For those who stay at the Hermitage no hut fees are charged and the necessary provisions are found. Porters...at the rate of 10s per day, and riding or pack horses at 7s 6d for the first day and 5s each for each subsequent day...complete Alpine equipment is provided free to all those staying under the auspices of the Tourist Dept.<sup>11</sup>

Climbing was not cheap at the Hermitage, but visitors could afford these costs, and they probably would not have gone there otherwise, though it was possible to camp in the area.<sup>12</sup> Non-climbers regularly had long holidays at the Hermitage,<sup>13</sup> but a climber too had to stay for weeks if much was to be achieved. Even a brief excursion to the Hermitage, including travel to and from, a week's stay and one glacier trip, would cost about £10. Some climbers stayed for six weeks and might average a high peak each week. Their expense would be somewhere between £60 and £100 depending on the number, type and length of climbs, and on the amount of liquor consumed. A few visitors found the costs greater than expected.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "Tourist Resorts of the Colony" - Unknown newspaper May 1906 WAK p4-5

<sup>12</sup> NA TO 1 1901/87/3 letters W A Kennedy to Tourist Dept, 22 November 1904 & 29 January 1905; E Olphert (née Tennent) "Hochstetter by an Old Timer" MS c1953 Bob Murie Wanaka; P Graham *Peter Graham Mountain Guide* Wellington 1965 p84

<sup>13</sup> Lawyer and politician Sir John Findlay was one prominent example - *AJHR* C-1 1901 p130; *Press* 24 February 1913 p9, 25 January 1924 p2

<sup>14</sup> W Tennant left owing money in 1903, and since his home address was unknown, the Tourist Dept was forced to write off the debt - NA TO 1 1901/87/3 letters Hermitage Caretaker to Dept & return 22 & 30 December 1904. Gertrude Benham complained about the costs at the Hermitage in 1905 - H E Newton PP NZAC Arch MS 1905 & newspaper clipping between 1904 and 1905 trip accounts. Similar *NZ Herald* 20 March 1905 p4; *Hot Lakes Chronicle* 29 March 1905; NA TO 1 1901/87/3, Benham letter 6 March, Clarke response 27 March 1905; Newton MS 1905; P Graham p93-104

Away from the Hermitage, climbing was also expensive. The Rev Henry Edward Newton, an Englishman who lived on the West Coast from 1901 to 1907, recorded the costs for some of his "trips into the hills" as he called his expeditions.<sup>15</sup> They varied from two weeks to two months and were often broken by time out on the West Coast or at the Hermitage. His 1904 trip up the Fox Glacier took a little over two weeks, and cost of more than £21, including all food, paying for cartage and swagging, and for his 'guide' Alec Graham.<sup>16</sup> A more extensive trip in 1905 took nearly four weeks, and in addition to paying for similar items and services on the West Coast, he spent £22 12s 10d at the Hermitage, over half on guides. His final trip, with breaks, spread over two months from January to March 1907, and cost £60 9s 10d. This was a Reverend of some means, and such expenditure was beyond most people.

Costs were not prohibitive for the better-off since more and more people visited the mountains between 1900 and 1920. The number staying at the Hermitage rose from 98 in 1899-1900, to 539 in 1913-4, to over 900 in 1919-20, with about a third from overseas up to the war. Most visitors were tourists, and the proportion of climbers remained low even though the Hermitage became the main climbing centre.<sup>17</sup> Other mountain areas were also attractive to tourists. Visitor numbers at Tongariro National Park grew slowly from the 1890s and more quickly from 1908. There was much more activity and development at Mt Egmont which thousands of people visited, increasingly all year round. Queenstown was well-established as a mountain resort before 1900 and the sights of the Lake Wakatipu region continued to draw people there. After 1900 tourism became established in a small way on the West Coast where the spectacular glaciers and luxuriant bush began to attract visitors.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Newton MS passim. His figures do not always add up to the totals he gives.

<sup>16</sup> First trip into the mountains for this later renowned guide.

<sup>17</sup> *AJHR* 1900-1920, esp. C-1 1900 p144, H-2 1914 p4, 1920 p4. Overseas visitors to Hermitage: 1906-7 38.5%, 1907-8 31.4%, 1908-9 32.7%, 1914 32% - *AJHR* H-2 1907 p10, 1908 p15, 1909 p13, 1914 p4

<sup>18</sup> Flanagan *Southern Alps and West Coast Tour*; *AJHR* H-2 1904 p11, 1907 p9, 1909 p12; (T Cook) *New Zealand as a Tourist and Health Resort* Auckland 1909 p75-81; P

One important reason for the increase in mountain visitors was considerable change and improvement to transport which facilitated travel. It became possible for people to spend a greater proportion of their holiday time at a mountain destination which might increase the possibility of exposure at first hand to the idea of climbing. Most transport development was in roading which improved access to remote places and made it faster, more comfortable and reliable. There was also one significant improvement in New Zealand's railway network, the completion of the North Island Main Trunk Line in 1908.<sup>19</sup> This was to change the focus of access to Ruapehu from Waihohonu Hut on the Desert Road side, to the Whakapapa or north-western side, about 12 miles from the railway. From 1908 to 1920 there was a beginning to alpine climbing on Ruapehu from both the Whakapapa and Ohakune approaches, but still tourist and climbing progress was limited without transport, accommodation and other facilities closer to the mountain.

It was the increasing use of motor vehicles which was most significant for mountain recreation. Although rail continued to be popular for long distance travel,<sup>20</sup> it was the combination of road and rail which enabled greater numbers of tourists and mountaineers to reach their aims more quickly.<sup>21</sup> Motor vehicle transport was especially important for access to a resort like the Hermitage which remained distant from rail services. The first cars arrived there at 4am on 8 February 1906.<sup>22</sup> Once Rodolf Wigley established his motor service to the Hermitage in the summer 1906-7, in time for tourists from the NZ International Exhibition in Christchurch, the journey from the railhead at Fairlie was reduced from a usual two days to one. The Thomas Cook agent in Christchurch, J O

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Graham p32,53,71-2; A Graham & J Wilson *Uncle Alec and the Grahams of Franz Josef* John McIndoe Dunedin 1983 p123-142

<sup>19</sup> AJHR 1909 H-2 p12; *Oxford History* p240. Date sometimes given as 1909

<sup>20</sup> (T Cook) 1909 *passim*

<sup>21</sup> Lake steamers were also essential on the southern lakes.

<sup>22</sup> D Pearce "Tourist Development at Mount Cook: Patterns and Processes since 1884" MA Thesis Geography CU 1932 p46. H Wigley *The Mount Cook Way* Auckland 1979 p10-11 is not so precise.



Jameson, considered "the motor car service between Fairlie and the Hermitage ...will do much to popularise Mount Cook not only as a tourist resort, but also as a health resort."<sup>23</sup> The report of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts for 1907 noted a considerable increase in visitors.<sup>24</sup>

However, cars and other vehicles were not enough on their own, and the further a climber or explorer went into the mountains the more dependence there was on horses and walking. Motor vehicles also required better roads and more bridges than horse-drawn coaches, and their impact, in terms of improving access to the mountains, only built up over time.<sup>25</sup> Motor vehicle transport between the railhead at Ross and both the Franz Josef and Fox glaciers was not properly established till after the First World War and it reached the western end of the Copland track at Karangarua even later.<sup>26</sup> In the south, motor vehicles did little to improve William Grave's access to Fiordland from the east before the war.<sup>27</sup> Only from the 1920s did private motor cars become more common.<sup>28</sup> By this time national and local government had done much of the roading and bridging necessary to make such transport possible. Then mountain recreationalists could find a freedom in the use of motor vehicles which could not be provided by public transport.

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<sup>23</sup> *Press* 12 November 1907 p8

<sup>24</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1907 p10

<sup>25</sup> The weather has always had a major impact on mountain roads. The route to the Hermitage was often cut, though all streams were bridged as early as 1914 - *AJHR* H-2 1908 p15, 1914 p5

<sup>26</sup> (T Cook) 1909 p79-80; F Roberts *By Forest Ways in New Zealand* London 1916 p90-101, 140-2; D Theomin Letters 1914-32 NZAC Arch; Graham & Wilson p151

<sup>27</sup> Railway, horse and lake steamer were all used before 1900. Grave also walked and cycled from Oamaru to Lake Te Anau - A Crozier ed *Beyond the Southern Lakes* Wellington 1974 passim

<sup>28</sup> *Oxford History* p227; A Grey *Aotearoa and New Zealand* Christchurch 1994 p32

Not only was access to the mountains improving, but information about alpine regions was more readily available from the 1890s to assist and encourage both tourism and climbing. Good visual reproductions served both to inform and attract, and albums on New Zealand included photographs of the mountain world.<sup>29</sup> Guidebooks showed the possibilities of travel to the mountains and also the beauties which might be found there.<sup>30</sup> After the turn of the century, topographical photographs as postcards became very popular, spreading views of the New Zealand landscape, including mountains and glaciers, around the world.<sup>31</sup> From 1901 the Tourist Department used photographs to advertise New Zealand both within and outside the country.<sup>32</sup> In the 1900s stereoscopic photographs of the mountains and glaciers were made for people to view at home.<sup>33</sup> Improvements in celluloid film meant smaller and faster cameras which did not need a tripod and this enabled a much wider variety of people to take photographs while on holiday.<sup>34</sup> Illustrated editions of newspapers often included scenic and mountain photos and they might feature climbing expeditions.<sup>35</sup> The photos of mountains displayed at the New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch 1906-7 were viewed by a considerable number of people who also found there information about how to reach the mountains.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *The Imperial Album of New Zealand Scenery* 2 vols Wellington & Christchurch 1899

<sup>30</sup> Flanagan *New Zealand Tours & Excursions* (various volumes); (T Cook); W Sinclair *Wondrous Wakatipu* Dunedin 1914

<sup>31</sup> H Knight *Photography in New Zealand* Dunedin 1971 p85-92; W Main & J Turner *New Zealand Photography from the 1840s to the Present* Auckland 1993 p24

<sup>32</sup> A/JHR H-2 1902 p2-4; *New Zealand* Dept of Tourist and Health Resorts Wellington c1907

<sup>33</sup> George Rose "Exploring in the Southern Alps Part III" unknown newspaper 9 May 1906 WAK p5; P Graham p128-33; Knight p155; G Langton personal collection

<sup>34</sup> Knight p160-2

<sup>35</sup> For example: *The Canterbury Times* 14 February 1906, *Weekly Press* Xmas Number 1907, *Otago Witness* Christmas Number 1913

<sup>36</sup> *Souvenir N.Z. International Exhibition* Christchurch 1907; F Du Faur *The Conquest of Mount Cook* London 1915 p26-7

Written publicity about the mountains and climbing also proliferated after 1900, though the lack of a local alpine club meant there was no specialist journal to systematically record and advertise climbing. The *Alpine Journal* in England included some articles about New Zealand climbing, and activity in the Mt Cook area was recorded in Tourist Department reports in the *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, but neither was widely available. For the general public in New Zealand, newspapers and magazines had accounts of climbs and mountain visits. Such articles, often written by visitors from overseas, increased in number and length up to the First World War. Accidents were sometimes publicised, but there were very few to either tourists or climbers, and they did not deter visitors.<sup>37</sup> Most often the main focus of written material was the beauty of the scenery, especially in the writing of Blanche Baughan who from 1908 sought "to celebrate local scenic attractions through word pictures."<sup>38</sup> Yet she helped make mountaineering respectable because she expressed the appeal to her of the 'uncivilised' nature of the mountains. Her work, like that of energetic tourists such as Maud Moreland<sup>39</sup> and Frances Roberts<sup>40</sup> complemented specialist climbing articles and books. Samuel Turner matched New Zealand peaks against those of other countries in *My Climbing Adventures in Four Continents* 1911. Malcolm Ross's *A Climber in New Zealand* 1914 outlined a considerable part of the history of New Zealand mountain climbing. Freda Du Faur's enthusiastic account of her climbing 1909-13 appeared in 1915 to inspire others to climb.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> There was a night out on the Tasman glacier for two women tourists 1902 which could have led to tragedy - *AJHR* H-2 1902 p19; P Graham p79-81. An accident to the Scottish climber Robert Low in 1906 led to little condemnation - Newton MS p56 & newspaper cuttings p105ff NZAC Arch; *AJHR* H-2 1906 p10; *NZAJ* 1953 p294-6; P Graham p121-5 (most accurate account); Graham & Wilson p61-3

<sup>38</sup> P Gibbons in T Sturm ed *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature* Auckland 1991 p53-4; B E Baughan produced many articles and booklets eg: *The Finest Walk in the World* Christchurch 1909, and collections eg: *Studies in New Zealand Scenery* Christchurch 1916; *Anderson Milford Trails* p68

<sup>39</sup> *Through South Westland* 1911, London & Christchurch 1916

<sup>40</sup> *By Forest Ways in New Zealand* London 1916

<sup>41</sup> *The Conquest of Mount Cook* London

It was not just the written and visual records of tourists and climbers which helped develop greater awareness of the mountains. New Zealand now had a more established academic community which in seeking to contribute to the knowledge of the wider world, also enhanced local familiarity:

scientists...especially botanists and geologists, explored isolated areas, collected specimens and published descriptive works: they were moved not merely by their own inquisitiveness but by their vital function as field workers for European scholars engaged upon the classification of phenomena.<sup>42</sup>

James Bell, Director of the Geological Survey Department, explored in South Westland early in 1907, and his book *The Wilds of Maoriland* 1914 included much on mountain areas.<sup>43</sup> Alpine plants featured in a number of botanical publications. Robert Laing and Ellen Blackwell's *Plants of New Zealand* was first produced in 1906. Leonard Cockayne reported on the Tongariro National Park in 1908, and his book on New Zealand's plants, based on earlier articles, first appeared in 1910.<sup>44</sup> Cockayne, Laing, and geologist Robert Speight explored some of the headwaters of the Rakaia and Rangitata rivers as far as the glaciers in 1909-10. Glaciation in New Zealand also continued to be of scientific interest.<sup>45</sup> Scientists had to use some of the techniques of mountaineering and they employed guides who possessed such skills. Jack Clarke left the Hermitage in 1906 to join the Geological Survey, and Bell found him invaluable.<sup>46</sup> Climbers themselves did not specifically pursue scientific aims but they were aware of that sort of exploration, and in the relatively small educated community in New Zealand there was a pooling of knowledge of mountain country.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Oxford History* p307

<sup>43</sup> *Press* 8 March 1907 p4; J M Bell *The Wilds of Maoriland* London 1914 p155-227

<sup>44</sup> R M Laing & E Blackwell *Plants of New Zealand* Christchurch 1906; *AJHR* C-8 1908 p2; L Cockayne *New Zealand Plants and their story* 1910, Wellington 1919

<sup>45</sup> *Press* 16 December 1909 p8, 20 & 22 January 1910 p8 & 7; *TNZI* 1910 p315-78; *NZAJ* 1933 p230

<sup>46</sup> J Bell p4; *NZAJ* 1953 p291

<sup>47</sup> *Press* 7 & 8 March 1910 p8 & 4 is one specific example. Philosophical societies and similar bodies helped disseminate scientific knowledge.

The variety of publicity contributed to the development of mountain tourism, but climbing was not of great importance before the First World War and the public perception of it remained ambivalent. Tourist visits to the mountains became common and accepted and a few visitors came to climb. More often climbing was generated in the mountains where some tourists were encouraged to aim high by the environment or the guides. Both there and in the wider community climbing might be seen as valid conquest of the peaks and landscape. However, there was some paradox in the concept of mountaineering as a 'leisure' activity, for it was often extremely taxing, both physically and mentally. Furthermore, in a period of developing urban recreation, climbing remained an oddity. Climbers sought out apparent danger in a remote and still frontier setting, yet pioneering was no longer such an integral part of society as it had been. Though there were more frequent newspaper accounts of climbs, only occasionally was there public recognition for climbing feats, such as that accorded Freda Du Faur when she became the first woman to ascend Mt Cook in late 1910.<sup>48</sup> Mountain tourism became an accepted part of New Zealand life, but climbing had a less certain place.

## GOVERNMENT AGENCY IN THE MOUNTAINS

Through its involvement in mountain tourism, the Liberal government provided much of the impetus for the re-development of climbing from 1901. The Liberals' policy of state intervention in a wide range of activities reached into the mountains to stimulate both tourism and climbing. The primary means of encouraging tourism was exploitation of the phenomena of the natural world, particularly thermal activity and the variety of scenery which included the mountains and glaciers. Efforts were made to bring New Zealand's scenic wonders to the knowledge of travellers at home and abroad and their approval confirmed the value of the mountain region. In addition, the state developed

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<sup>48</sup> Du Faur p110-1

transport and accommodation to support tourism, and one new government department provided facilities in the mountains to service and encourage visitors. Thus it was the actions of the state rather than private enterprise which encouraged and legitimated recreational activity in the mountains.

In 1901 the Liberal Government set up the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts to encourage tourism and settlement.<sup>49</sup> Improvements in the economy, transport and other facilities were assisting internal tourism, but the primary aim was to attract people from overseas. There was some desire to create a more prominent position for New Zealand on a world stage, but the more immediate objects were the income to be gained from overseas tourists, the publicity they could give New Zealand abroad, and an increased number of immigrants of good status.<sup>50</sup> The government was well aware that New Zealand was competing on a world market for tourists and settlers, and so it set out deliberately to advertise New Zealand and provide for visitors. For some of this period the Tourist Department, as it was known, was independent, but at times it was incorporated within other departments.<sup>51</sup> Whatever its status, the Department made considerable efforts before the First World War to develop tourism to and in New Zealand. The thermal areas were the main focus, but travellers might seek health, sport, or aesthetic pleasure in more scenic mountain regions.<sup>52</sup>

Under its first Superintendent, T E (Thomas) Donne, the Tourist Department set out to draw tourists to New Zealand. Public servants established a series of local and overseas Government Tourist Bureaux to publicise New Zealand and better service travellers through making information available and in a more

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<sup>49</sup> AJHR H-2 1902 p1-3

<sup>50</sup> AJHR H-2 1906 p1, 1907 p1-2

<sup>51</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Commerce and Tourists* 1910-12; AJHR H-2 1913 p1; NA TO Historical Note p1

<sup>52</sup> AJHR H-2 especially 1902-5 p1-3

organised fashion.<sup>53</sup> Efforts were made to have the country represented at Exhibitions overseas.<sup>54</sup> Displays at occasions such as the Christchurch Exhibition 1906-7, partly sponsored by the state, encouraged people to visit tourist resorts like the Hermitage.<sup>55</sup> Considerable energy went into publicising New Zealand as: "a country for settlement, a tourist resort, a land for sport, and a place of business".<sup>56</sup> The Department sought to advertise through appreciations from visitors of what New Zealand offered.<sup>57</sup> It also invited individuals who would highlight different aspects of the country's attractions, and a climber was one of those brought to New Zealand by the Department. Donne met Samuel Turner, a Manchester merchant, in London early in 1905 at a lecture by the latter about his expedition to Siberia. Donne invited Turner to New Zealand to climb as a guest of the government, considering that the publicity generated by such a person would be beneficial to tourism and settlement.<sup>58</sup> Turner could be a difficult person, but he came to New Zealand in 1905 to climb and he did just that.<sup>59</sup> He later settled in Wellington and continued his mountain activity.<sup>60</sup> Turner liked to boast of his own achievements, but the publicity gained for the New Zealand mountains through his many articles, photographs and two books made Donne's invitation a successful investment.

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<sup>53</sup> This development can be traced through AJHR H-2: 1902 p1-2, 1905 p2, 1906 p2, 1907 p1-2, 1908 p2

<sup>54</sup> AJHR H-2 1905 p1-2 mentions St Louis Exhibition and two in England.

<sup>55</sup> AJHR H-2 1907 p1; Du Faur p26-7

<sup>56</sup> AJHR H-2 1903 i

<sup>57</sup> AJHR H-2 1903 p17-18, 1904 p14

<sup>58</sup> S Turner *My Climbing Adventures in Four Continents* London 1911 p177; P Graham p107

<sup>59</sup> Among other climbs he made a first traverse of Mt Cook with Malcolm Ross and guides Tom Fyfe and Peter Graham - ODT 1906: 22 February p2, 1 March p2; M Ross *The First Traverse of Mount Cook* Wellington 1906; Turner *Climbing Adventures* p201-27; P Graham p109-15

<sup>60</sup> S Turner *The Conquest of the New Zealand Alps* London 1922 p15. He settled in New Zealand in 1911

To complement the advertising and other publicity, the Tourist Department had to provide facilities and services for tourists, and in doing this the it perhaps went further than its elected masters had originally intended. The Department's work soon extended throughout New Zealand as it sought to develop a variety of mountain and scenic areas, as well as thermal resorts and other reserves. Not all the Department's initiatives or hopes led to improved facilities or the development of mountain tourism, but significant progress was made throughout New Zealand.<sup>61</sup> Often it took over existing services from private owners or other government departments and sought to improve them. There was involvement in the Southern Lakes area where viewing was the most important purpose of visitors. The Milford Track was the setting for more energetic activity to reach the spectacular scenery, and the Department took control of the Track specifically to develop it.<sup>62</sup> From 1907 it also sponsored exploration to find an alternative route to Milford Sound.<sup>63</sup> The Tongariro National Park had tourist and climbing possibilities. Two huts were built "for the convenience of those who desire to ascend Tongariro or Ruapehu".<sup>64</sup> People climbed the volcanoes but neither access nor accommodation was good, even after the North Island main trunk railway allowed more visitors from north or south. Development was limited till after Peter Graham, Chief Guide at the Hermitage, had recommended the Whakapapa side in 1919, and then it occurred largely because of private enterprise.<sup>65</sup> Mt Egmont too was attractive to tourists and climbers, and both transport and accommodation were

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<sup>61</sup> For example, interest in the Upper Waimakariri valley came to nothing, in spite of a report on it by AP Harper in 1912 (*NZAJ* 1922 p122). The scenery there was not as striking as further south and it was seen as a potential recreational area for the people of Canterbury rather than for overseas tourists. The First World War also limited new initiatives by the Tourist Dept.

<sup>62</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1903 xiii-xiv, 1904 p15, 1906 p11, 1907 p11

<sup>63</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1909 p1-2,15, 1913 p6; Crozier p68ff; Hall-Jones *Fiordland Explored* p103

<sup>64</sup> Ketetahi Hut on Tongariro and Waihohonu Hut south-east of Ngauruhoe off the Desert Road, probably built 1903 - *AJHR* H-2 1902 p16 arrangements made for building, 1904 p11 they "have been erected during this year". Tongariro National Park handbooks have a variety of dates.



reasonably well-developed there.<sup>66</sup> The Mt Egmont National Park Board was established in 1900 by Act of Parliament and partly funded through the Tourist Department.<sup>67</sup> Many people scrambled to the summit in summer and George Mannering showed the alpine possibilities of winter climbing in 1902-3,<sup>68</sup> but the mountain's potential as an alpine training ground was undeveloped till after the First World War.<sup>69</sup>

The Hermitage was the principal centre for mountain tourism controlled by the Tourist Department and it received considerable attention from departmental officers. Tourists always had priority at this resort since they provided the greatest publicity and income, but it was the natural centre for climbing, and provision for tourists also assisted climbers. Nearby were Mt Cook, the highest peak in the country, and many other notable mountains. At their feet were the large valley glaciers which, in a temperate climate, were unusual by any standards and thus a considerable attraction. The Liberal government had purchased the Hermitage in 1895, but little was done to it before the creation of the Tourist Department. It made an attempt to provide for visitors in terms of roading, accommodation and services, but, like all government agencies, it was unable to do all that was needed or wanted. The Hermitage building itself, built of cob in 1885, was a problem for years. The Department advocated a new hotel on a different site from 1903,<sup>70</sup> but the government was unwilling to commit itself to the required expenditure. Income increased, but so did

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<sup>65</sup> NZAJ 1945 p69; A J Beckham & G F Sargeant eds *A Mountain and A School* Ohakune 1946; J Graham p23-30; Esler p16; W Mead p9-17,22-3

<sup>66</sup> A B Scanlan *Egmont The Story of a Mountain* p58-90 passim

<sup>67</sup> AJHR C-1 1902 p85, H-2 1903 xi,17, 1905 p21 (reported a doubling of visitor numbers), 1906 p18

<sup>68</sup> Mannering *Eighty Years* p80

<sup>69</sup> Scanlan *Egmont Story* p90-1. Former Hermitage guide Jim Murphy moved to Egmont in 1912 and did much to influence the growth of independent climbing there in the 1920s.

<sup>70</sup> AJHR H-2 1903 xiii, 1904 p13, 1905 p12, 1906 p10, 1908 p2,15, 1909 p1,13

expenses, and the Hermitage did well to break even.<sup>71</sup> In spite of the condition of the building, a twenty bed annexe was added in 1906 to cater for the increased number of visitors resulting from the Christchurch Exhibition of 1906-7.<sup>72</sup> Eventually a new Hermitage was begun in 1912 and, after severe flood damage to the old one in 1913, the new hostel was opened in January 1914. It soon proved too small for the summer demand.<sup>73</sup>

The costs, lack of profit, and later war, did not prevent the Tourist Department from making improvements to many other facilities in the Mt Cook area to assist mountain tourism. There was pressure from Hermitage staff and visitors to bring greater 'civilisation' to these mountains to enable tourists to live more comfortably and to see and do more. Many of the developments benefited climbers. Boots, alpenstocks and ice axes were acquired for the use of visitors. Tracks and bridges improved access to the glaciers and mountains, and some huts were built for energetic tourists. Hooker Hut was erected in late 1910 for the Copland Pass trip,<sup>74</sup> and the small Almer bivouac was put up the Franz Josef Glacier 1914-5, to make crossings of Graham Saddle easier.<sup>75</sup> However, the Mueller and Haast Ridge Huts, and the Sefton Bivy, all built 1915-7, were for climbers rather than tourists. The King Memorial Hut on Haast Ridge, partly funded by subscription, was the first hut suitable for a number of the high climbs including Mt Cook. This material development, specific to climbing, came about because there were after 1908 enough climbers with ambitions on high peaks to justify such facilities and to put pressure on the Department to provide them.<sup>76</sup> The very existence of high huts then encouraged people to be more energetic and think of climbing.

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<sup>71</sup> See income & expenditure figures *AJHR* H-2 1904-1920

<sup>72</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1907 p10

<sup>73</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1914 p4, 1915 p5, 1916 p4; J Wilson p192-3

<sup>74</sup> Du Faur p85,87,95; P Graham p186-8 has construction a year earlier.

<sup>75</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1915 p5

<sup>76</sup> Turner was one who pushed for more guides and better services for climbers - *Press* 29 March 1913 p6; Turner *Conquest* p45-7

## THE DOMINANCE OF GUIDES

The major contribution of the Liberal government, through the Tourist Department, to the development of climbing, came in the provision of guides for visitors to the Hermitage. These guides became the prominent New Zealand climbers of the period. After initially providing leadership onto the glaciers which tourists had come to view and experience, the role of the guide was extended onto the peaks as far as the summits. This was in response to the expectations and requirements of tourists and a few climbers from overseas, though some of the guides too were ambitious for the peaks. A small group of professional mountain guides was established at the Hermitage and they were paid by the government to lead those who wished up mountains. They provided a service which assisted climbers and climbing and they served as models and mentors for all mountaineers. The guides also advised the Tourist Department on mountain developments and encouraged the provision of more facilities for tourists and climbers. Since the guides' experience was nearly always greater than that of their clients, they were able to dominate recreation in the Mt Cook region, and most climbing throughout New Zealand. The general acceptance of guides as the leaders of climbing contrasted with the largely independent climbing of the 1880s and 1890s. Climbing led by guides became the new formalisation of climbing, giving it a structure and organisation acceptable to society. In this way a few prominent guides became very influential in the small scale world of alpine recreation. The establishment of a norm of guided climbing also ensured, even more sharply than before, the pre-eminence of the middle-class in climbing.

Interaction between visitors to the mountains and the guides in the mountains led to the creation, growth and dominance of climbers who were labourers, the high-climbing guides. They were a response to demand by middle-class tourists and climbers for assistance. The government had employed guides at the Hermitage from 1896 to escort tourists onto the glaciers, but it was not till after the creation of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts early in 1901

that visitors to the Hermitage were actively sought. The formation of the Tourist Department closely followed the appointment of Jack Clarke as Chief Guide at the Hermitage in December 1900. Though glacier guiding was his main occupation, he was one of very few New Zealanders still interested in climbing. His appointment came after an overseas trip during which he climbed Mont Blanc and the Breithorn, and he came back with a more confident attitude towards guiding, climbing and the New Zealand mountains.<sup>77</sup> He was capable of responding to the desire of visitors to be more active in the mountain world; indeed, without his presence people who wished to climb would have had great difficulty doing so. At the same time, without the visitors, Clarke, as a paid guide, would have had no reason to climb.

The number of people visiting the Hermitage built up steadily from the beginning of the twentieth century. They usually came as tourists or for a relatively civilised holiday, to this place where the novelty was in the setting, and viewing was a principal activity. If they wished to do anything more energetic away from the immediate Hermitage area, visitors both wanted and needed guides for route-finding because of their lack of experience in these or any mountains. The assistance and service they sought and expected also included load-carrying, whether for a short trip or a more extensive excursion to a glacier, a hut or for an overnight camp. Clothing, food and equipment were all heavy. The guides' ability to read the weather might also be important for successful outings, which could range from picnics and glacier visits, to travel on glaciers and climbs. As more visitors began to go further into and up the mountains, the climbing and leadership skills of the guides became increasingly significant.

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<sup>77</sup> AJHR C-1 1901 p130-1

The presence of Malte Brun Hut well up the Tasman glacier drew visitors into the mountains, causing them to engage in a more intimate relationship with the mountains than passive viewing from a distance allowed.<sup>78</sup> That hut also acted as a base for the comparatively straightforward ascent of Hochstetter Dome. A group from Timaru was typical of the more adventurous that Clarke guided:

Mr Tennent...with a party of eight, five of whom were ladies, visited Brodrick's hut. Three members made an excursion to the shoulder of the Dom the following day...The weather was exceptionally fine, and the party were unanimous in praise of all they saw.<sup>79</sup>

Overseas visitors made similar excursions. Like New Zealanders, they needed the assistance of guides, but, unlike the locals, they also expected it.

Englishman Dudley Yorke was "familiar with the Himalayas, Pyrenees, and the High Alps", but this gentlemanly traveller would not have ascended Hochstetter Dome on 3 March 1901, principally for the view, without the leadership of Jack Clarke.<sup>80</sup> Yet more independent activity was possible and might be approved by a guide who encouraged mountain recreation. In 1902 two sisters, Maud and Elfie Williams from Wellington, did more than the usual glacier trips on their holiday. They sometimes ventured out without guides and on some excursions they aimed, not at views but at the summits, albeit not very difficult ones.<sup>81</sup>

Other visitors, whose primary intention was to ascend mountains, expected assistance on the peaks and thus encouraged the formation of a guiding service for climbers rather than tourists. Critical to this change of emphasis was the arrival in 1903 of three English climbers, Claude Macdonald who was then living in Australia, and O J Bainbridge and W G Tennant directly from England.<sup>82</sup> They used the existing tourist infrastructures but made it clear that

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<sup>78</sup> Occasionally this almost resulted in disaster - *AJHR* H-2 1902 p19; P Graham p79-81

<sup>79</sup> *AJHR* C-1 1901 p131. Malte Brun Hut was sometimes called Brodrick's Hut. See also Evelyn Olphert (née Tennent) "Hochstetter by an Old Timer" typescript c1953 Bob Murie Wanaka

<sup>80</sup> *AJHR* 1901 C-1 p131

<sup>81</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1902 p19

<sup>82</sup> Macdonald and Bainbridge were both Alpine Club members.

seeking to reach the summits was a legitimate reason for visiting the mountains. Like most climbers before 1907, these visitors came to New Zealand with some skill and knowledge, but they were happy for local guides to do the leading and the hard work of step-cutting and load-carrying. Climbing was thus redefined as a recreation for the well-off which involved more than viewing, and as employment for some labourers. Between 1903 and 1907 the expectations of such visitors and the competence of Clarke and other guides not only set this formal pattern for climbing, but were largely responsible for re-establishing high mountain climbing in New Zealand.

Macdonald gave the first public demonstration for some years that climbing high mountains was an acceptable or desirable leisure pursuit. He came to the Hermitage with his wife for a six-week holiday early in 1903. His intention was to climb mountains, he expected to be led by a guide, and, as had others before, he aimed first at the highest. In February he made attempts on Mt Cook from the west and the east with Jack Clarke, but poor weather meant they were unsuccessful.<sup>83</sup> Macdonald's perception of New Zealand as a place for a climbing holiday was reinforced in the same season by "Two young...trained mountaineers",<sup>84</sup> Tennant and Bainbridge. They did not aim so high as Macdonald but, led by Clarke, they achieved more with ascents of Mts Sealy, Darwin, Blackburn and Climber's Col.<sup>85</sup> The experiences of these climbers once again publicised New Zealand mountains in English climbing circles through articles in the English *Alpine Journal*. More than this, the visiting climbers acknowledged that there was an alpine guiding service available in New Zealand. Both Macdonald and Bainbridge made particular and positive mention of Clarke, suggesting that FitzGerald's judgement of him in 1895 had been harsh, and in this one season Clarke regained a substantial reputation for

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<sup>83</sup> AJHR H-2 1903 xiv; AJ XXI 1902-3 p475-9

<sup>84</sup> C Barnicoat "Through the Copland Pass: Where no Woman Ever Went Before" *The Wide World Magazine* March 1904 p567

<sup>85</sup> AJHR H-2 1903 xiv; Andersen *South Canterbury* p680,700,704,712

competence and willingness as an alpine guide.<sup>86</sup> There had been a fortunate confluence of climbing aims between Clarke and the visitors which did much to develop an alpine guiding service and re-establish mountain climbing.

Reverend H E Newton was another who helped set in place the guide-client model through his stimulation of climbing from the West Coast glaciers. He came to New Zealand in 1901 aged 28, having "spent five seasons in the Alps".<sup>87</sup> As he wanted to be near mountains, Bishop Julius appointed him Vicar of Ross and South Westland.<sup>88</sup> He teamed up with Dr Ebenezer Teichelmann,<sup>89</sup> an Australian who had come to Hokitika in 1897 to be Medical Superintendent of Westland Hospital. Teichelmann's interest in the mountains had been aroused at the age of 40 on a photography trip in 1899 up the Callery river near Franz Josef glacier. Newton had the experience, if not always the fitness, to be independent in the mountains, but he expected some assistance. Teichelmann was inexperienced, so these two enlisted the support of various West Coasters, initially as load-carriers. In their desire to explore and climb, Newton and Teichelmann developed climbing labourers who in time became guides. Newton was the climbing leader and he gave Peter Graham in 1902-3 and Alec Graham in 1903-4, their original tuition in climbing technique.<sup>90</sup> These brothers became skilled and experienced enough to be leaders on the peaks and they went on to become New Zealand's pre-eminent guides, dominating climbing for many years.

Newton, the big solid vicar, and Teichelmann, 'the little Doctor' as he was known, set a slightly different pattern of mountaineering from that at the Hermitage since they explored as much as they climbed. The vast expanses of

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<sup>86</sup> AJ 1902-3 XXI p476, 1904-5 XXII p121-2

<sup>87</sup> NZAJ 1961 p165, quoting HEL Porter; P Graham p49 supports this.

<sup>88</sup> NZAJ 1961 p165; Graham & Wilson p39

<sup>89</sup> Graham & Wilson p39; P Graham p49 has a slightly different story.

<sup>90</sup> Newton MS; NZAJ 1961 p160-1; P Graham p38-45; Graham & Wilson p39

the upper Fox and Franz Josef glaciers had never been surveyed, so peaks were not initially the primary aim. Inexperience also deterred them from possible ascents.<sup>91</sup> Knowledge of weather and conditions had to be acquired, passes made, peaks located and mountaineering experience gained by the novices before the summits could be focused on. However, over their six seasons in the mountains they moved from exploring towards high climbing guided by Alec Graham. In 1905-6 their party was strengthened by the experienced Scottish climber, Robert Low. This group explored successfully and also made the first ascents of high peaks such as Mts La Perouse, Hicks, Haast and Douglas.<sup>92</sup> They showed how much there was still to climb, and how difficult it was on the West Coast where there were no facilities in the mountains.

Newton, Teichmann and Low set an important example at the Hermitage too in ascending Mt Cook by Zurbriggen's route on 3 February 1905. This was the first climb of Mt Cook for ten years. It showed again that the highest peak could be reached, that some people wished to do so, and that the New Zealand guides Jack Clarke and Peter Graham were capable of such feats. The three clients who made this climb were a vicar, a doctor and a Scottish gentleman, all, temporarily at least, resident in New Zealand. This helped give climbing more respectability in society,<sup>93</sup> as did two other climbers from overseas in 1906. The English merchant Sam Turner would not have been able to make the first traverse of Mt Cook 9-11 January 1906<sup>94</sup> without the hard work of Peter Graham and the skill of Tom Fyfe.<sup>95</sup> The Dutch gentleman, Henrik Sillem, an

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<sup>91</sup> Newton MS 11 February 1903; P Graham p67

<sup>92</sup> All over 10,000ft.

<sup>93</sup> Accounts of expeditions appeared in Christmas numbers of illustrated weeklies - *Auckland Graphic* Christmas Number 1904; *Weekly Press* Xmas Number 1907. Full, immediate newspaper accounts of climbs were uncommon till a few years later.

<sup>94</sup> Actual ascent of Cook 10th, though often recorded as 9th January: Turner *Climbing* p206-9; Andersen p674; J Wilson p232. They left the bivouac at 11.15pm 9 January 1906 and reached the summit 1pm the next day: Ross *First Traverse* p13-16; P Graham p110

<sup>95</sup> Fyfe was persuaded to come out of climbing retirement to act as a personal guide to Turner. As a friend of Fyfe, Malcolm Ross became the fourth member of the party.



experienced climber, was most impressed with Graham in the same season.<sup>96</sup> All these climbs and climbers confirmed both the recreation, and the formation of a guiding service.

The visitors enjoyed their mountaineering, but their accounts were often slightly equivocal.<sup>97</sup> They made it clear that climbing in New Zealand was much less 'civilised' than the activity in Europe, and that a different approach and attitude were needed. The weather was often unsuitable, so time was needed by the would-be mountaineer. Facilities and services were reaching further into the New Zealand mountains but compared to Europe the climbing was very arduous. Visiting climbers also found a different, more difficult, natural environment and this made them question the viability of climbing in New Zealand. Bainbridge was not happy with the scree: "I had sampled a fair amount of scree on minor hills, but as this kind of thing was not exhilarating I kept for the most part to the hotel smoking-room."<sup>98</sup> The amount of moraine on the glaciers, which made access difficult, was also off-putting, and Bainbridge saw that as a reason why New Zealanders had not taken up climbing. He was also concerned about "the rottenness of the rocks".<sup>99</sup> Overall the 'uncivilised' New Zealand mountains disconcerted him, though the employment of guides and porters helped overcome some problems of the terrain.

Newton realised after his first transalpine trip in 1902 that the approach he had had to climbing in Europe could not be sustained in New Zealand. He wrote:

My ideas of climbing were considerably changed I had expected to be able to climb as easily & frequently as in Switzerland I had to learn that to climb peaks up unknown valleys a base camp & a high camp & a good deal of swagging &

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<sup>96</sup> ODT 19 March 1906 p3; *Press* 24 March 1906 p10; *Canterbury Times* 1906 WAK p8; *AJHR* H-2 1906 p10; Andersen p674-5,680,687,702,705; P Graham p116-21,125-27 [inconsistencies in dates and guides]. Sillem was so impressed with Graham that he offered him a two-year, round the world, touring and climbing trip, on salary with expenses paid. Graham did not accept because of his elderly mother. Sillem was killed descending a mountain within that time - *NZ Herald* 18 September 1907 p7

<sup>97</sup> *AJ* XXI 1902-3 p475-9, XXII 1904-5 p28-42,109-22; Newton MS

<sup>98</sup> *AJ* XXII 1904-5 p35

<sup>99</sup> *AJ* XXII 1904-5 p32

preliminary work was necessary in fact...I should say that a fortnight at least is necessary before one can begin to think of climbing & even then all being unknown a good deal of prospecting is necessary before a climb is possible.<sup>100</sup>

This was expeditionary climbing, not only different from that which prevailed in Europe, but also in some contrast to climbing from the Hermitage. There previous pioneering had built up a pool of knowledge, and provision for tourists had already created some facilities for climbers. Over time, Newton and Teichelmann developed porters, guides and known routes to assist them on the West Coast, and thus they broadened the scope of climbing. More importantly, their expeditionary climbing, in which exploration had to come first and loads had to be carried into the mountains to provide camps, was to be the pattern of future climbing in all more remote parts of New Zealand. Twenty and more years later, when exploratory mountaineering became the norm, other climbers looked back to Newton and Teichelmann as significant pioneers, whose enthusiasm, determination and adaptability were also to be imitated.

Some visitors found it difficult to cope with the attitudes and lack of facilities to be found in the New Zealand mountains. Before he even experienced the mountain terrain, Bainbridge was disturbed by a lack of welcome and service on arrival at the Hermitage, though he noted this was because "The Governor's party was at the Hermitage." He went on:

A little adaptation is required to colonial methods, and things go very well; but there is a good deal that is irritating at first to the English visitor, as service, though paid for, seems grudgingly given.<sup>101</sup>

Clearly there was a certain egalitarianism at the Hermitage, and visitors from the 'Mother Country' were expected to adapt to the colony, not the other way round. Weeks at the Hermitage did modify Bainbridge's view,<sup>102</sup> but not everyone showed an ability to fit in. Not only did she complain about the costs in 1905, but the travelling Englishwoman, Gertrude Benham, also displayed a

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<sup>100</sup> Newton MS, end 1902 trip account p125

<sup>101</sup> AJ XXII 1904-5 p31

<sup>102</sup> AJ XXII 1904-5 p31

superior attitude and her climbing incompetence, both of which were irritating to others at the Hermitage. The guides were as patient as they could be, and waited for her to move on to some other tourist centre.<sup>103</sup>

There were few such visitors and by 1905 guiding was well enough established for climbers from overseas to have to conform to the New Zealand situation. Thus, as the number increased, newcomers to climbing at the Hermitage were incorporated into the existing guided climbing structure and accepted it. There was already some tradition behind the guides, and a few of them had years of experience in both climbing and guiding which automatically made them the experts. Guides were sponsored and publicised as the normal means by which to achieve adventure in the mountains. Through their employment by the Tourist Department they were representatives of the government. At the Hermitage the Chief Guide was a principal agent of the Department, of similar status to the hotel manager, and like him concerned about certain of the clients' needs. The Department came to rely on its Chief Guides and even supported them against complaints.<sup>104</sup> It allowed them considerable independence in day-to-day activities in the mountains and responded to their suggestions about improving facilities when it could. The guides, and their judgement, were held in high esteem in official circles by 1905, and this reputation was to be further enhanced.

Peter Graham was the Chief Guide from November 1906, and through him mountain guides dominated New Zealand climbing for many years. His position, personality, and skill as a mountaineer all gave him pre-eminence till after the First World War. He was a climber who achieved much in his own right, but he did it through guiding. Of little formal education, this West Coast labourer grew into his guiding and leadership role, like Jack Clarke before

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<sup>103</sup> NA TO 1 1901/87/3; Newton MS 1905; P Graham p93-104

<sup>104</sup> NA TO 1 1901/87/3

him.<sup>105</sup> Soon he dominated the mountain world which became in some senses his world. At a time when there was no New Zealand Alpine Club and little overseas influence on ways of climbing, Graham set the standards. He controlled mountain recreation in the Mt Cook region to enable people to enjoy their mountain experiences, and to ensure that climbing was done safely. Guides offered both climbers and the public the likelihood that climbing could be accomplished with a minimum of danger. A later age would see this as too cautious an approach, but Graham achieved his aims, and because of this he attracted people to climb at the Hermitage as his younger brother Alec did on the West Coast at Waiho Gorge.<sup>106</sup>

The main role of the guide was to mediate between the 'civilised' and mountain worlds, and Peter Graham sought to assist all visitors to enjoy something of the alpine world he loved. He became a skilled manager of people, establishing certain customs at the Hermitage which were accepted as the way things were done in that remote spot. He believed in making haste slowly in the mountains, but he stimulated energetic holidaying.<sup>107</sup> If visitors did not climb they were persuaded to be active on glacier trips, walks and picnics.<sup>108</sup> His combination of strength, gentleness, friendly encouragement and culture made sure most visitors enjoyed themselves and they often achieved more than they thought they could. On the peaks themselves, Graham and other climbing guides<sup>109</sup> showed increasing self-confidence and initiative. The result, in the years before the war, was what can be termed a 'Golden Age' of climbing. Centred on the guides, climbing increased in quantity and even more in quality as the skills of

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<sup>105</sup> Graham's early mentors were Arthur Woodham and the Rev Newton. He learnt his climbing mainly from Clarke, though books were also useful - P Graham p25,81

<sup>106</sup> Graham & Wilson p127-43. Waiho Gorge was then the name for the settlement at Franz Josef glacier.

<sup>107</sup> This occurred elsewhere, for example: Alys Lowth *Emerald Hours in New Zealand* Christchurch 1907 p106-115,122-124 - considerable feats on the Milford Track.

<sup>108</sup> Du Faur passim

<sup>109</sup> Jack Clarke, Alec Graham and occasionally Tom Fyfe were private guides. At the Hermitage Mick Collett, Jack Lippe, Charlie Milne, Frank Milne, Jim Murphy, Jock Richmond, Darby Thomson and Dick Young were guides.

the guides allowed difficult climbs to be tackled. In 1901, before high guiding became established, there were only three ascents, all of Hochstetter Dome, by a total of five tourists, plus their guides.<sup>110</sup> By the heyday of New Zealand guided climbing in 1912-13, ascents of such straightforward peaks as Hochstetter Dome were not even mentioned in the annual report from the Hermitage because they were so common. In spite of broken weather, there was more guiding work than ever before and in that season sixteen new or significant climbs were achieved by four guides and fourteen client climbers.<sup>111</sup>

Though their activities overlapped in the mountains, a clear difference between tourists and climbers emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Tourists might climb above the valley floors for better or different sights, but that would be enough, as the English climber Bainbridge noted in 1903.

These excursions [to Mt Ollivier & Malte Brun Hut] should prove sufficient for the casual visitor, otherwise the lower hills on the Cook Range or Mt Sebastopol will provide as nice an example of sérac as the most fastidious would wish to sample. But by this time...it is probable that the tourist will have had enough of 'climbing,' unless...the mountains...have engendered in him an ambition to take up real mountaineering work.<sup>112</sup>

Tourists did not usually wish to be very energetic, though the availability of guides enabled them to ascend easy peaks. Climbers were more adventurous and focused, having made a conscious decision to seek to reach summits, in response to a challenge perceived in them. In common, climbers had a considerable enthusiasm, called 'mountain fever', both for the mountains and for 'conquest' of the high peaks. There were aesthetic pleasures in climbing, and often an emotional attachment to the mountains, but a sense of physical competition between human beings and nature was also strong. Achievement came to those skilled and determined enough to overcome difficulties.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *AJHR* 1901 C-1 p131; Olphert suggests the Tennent party reached the summit.

<sup>111</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1913 p4-5. Next season, the last unaffected by war, most new climbs were made by a Canadian climber and his Austrian guide - *AJHR* H-2 1914 p5-7

<sup>112</sup> *AJ* XXII 1904-5 p30

<sup>113</sup> *AJ* XXII 1904-5 p30; *Du Faur* p23-9; *NZAJ* 1939 p13-4

Tourists and paying climbers depended on the guides to resolve mountain difficulties for them, but guides were also dependent on these visitors since clients were the rationale for climbing. Guides chose to make a living through guiding, but unlike Tom Fyfe, George Graham and Jack Clark in the 1890s, later guides did not also climb for recreation.<sup>114</sup> Since the sport was expensive, being a guide was almost the only way a labouring man could spend time in the mountains and go climbing. Clients paid for guides to go climbing, and a skilled 'amateur' climber meant the guides could do unusual or difficult climbs,<sup>115</sup> sometimes away from the Mt Cook area. However, most climbers were neither capable of nor interested in the climbing the guides might have liked to do, so guide activity and ambitions were limited by their clients. It was difficult for visitors to spend sufficient time in the mountains to overcome weather problems and to develop the fitness and skill to enjoy the challenges of the more difficult and dangerous. A climber who returned made progress, but the guide usually had greater skill and always retained the leadership role.

The style and techniques of climbing remained relatively unchanged over the period Peter Graham was Chief Guide, and existing practices were sufficient for new and more difficult climbs to be made. Graham and other guides sought to control the degree of danger as much as they could in an ever-changing natural environment where choice of mountain was often determined by the conditions. They were successful in establishing safe climbing, and the only fatalities of the period resulted from an avalanche, a natural phenomenon, not from climber or guide error.<sup>116</sup> Climbing techniques were adequate for the ascents aimed at and there were plenty of new peaks and routes to be climbed by the methods used. However, New Zealand climbing was frozen in a specific

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<sup>114</sup> The best guides did enjoy the mountains, the achievements and the danger. C Kain "The Ascent of Mt Cook" in *Rod and Gun in Canada* XVII No 9 February 1916 p897. Also P Graham, Graham & Wilson passim

<sup>115</sup> Graham & Wilson p111. Freda Du Faur is the best example of a skilled client.

<sup>116</sup> On 22 February 1914 guides Darby Thomson and Jock Richmond, with their English client Sydney King, were killed by an avalanche when descending the Linda Glacier after an ascent of Mt Cook. In spite of the publicity, there was no attack on climbing as a recreation - *AJHR* H-2 1914 p7; *ODT & Press* 25 February-3 March 1914.

type which placed certain limitations upon it. The leadership of guides, while enabling climbing to occur, also limited the mountain independence and skill development of the clients. It was difficult for guided climbers, even those as experienced as Freda Du Faur, to develop their personal decision-making or acquire the finer climbing skills when they were always led by guides.<sup>117</sup> Perhaps the problem in all this was too much isolation from the rest of the climbing world, enforced during the war, but largely established earlier. Decades of guideless climbing and rock and ice ascents using pitons and crampons in Europe had no impact on or relevance to New Zealand's own guide-led system.

For safety reasons the guides usually did all the leading. Unless rock was easy, snow was preferred because it was not as steep, but this might involve laborious cutting of steps with an ice axe, which only guides could do. The required upper body strength and endurance was not possessed by those who could afford to go climbing with guides. Both step cutting on hard snow and use of a tight rope in set positions tended to make for safe but slow climbing which restricted the choice of routes. For beginners and on high climbs three came to be the accepted number on the rope, which was slower than climbing in pairs. Crampons, through obviating the need for so much step cutting, would have led to greater speed, which in changeable weather could be safer, and they would also have given possibility of more climbing independence. Though crampons were used occasionally between 1903 and 1914, Peter Graham set the pattern of not using such equipment, probably because crampons were heavy to carry and dangerous on beginners.<sup>118</sup>

The actual climbing placed the mountain guide in the centre of rather complex relationships. On the surface the guide-client model was of inferior and superior, employee and employer. While the guide was perhaps subservient at

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<sup>117</sup> Du Faur p117-9

<sup>118</sup> F Malcher "In the Mountains of New Zealand" 1934, translated by J Malcher 1970 typescript ATL; G Langton "Means employed by foreigners..." NZAJ 1994 p91-4

the Hermitage, he controlled access to the mountain zone and was responsible for the safety of clients, so he was dominant on the mountains. The guides' power to determine mountain activity also influenced attitude. This may have helped limit any sense of imperial superiority in overseas visitors, and the guides could restrict people who wished to be 'peak baggers'. However, the livelihood of the guides depended on people who wanted to climb. Those who could never climb enough, like Sam Turner, were desirable to the guides, no matter how difficult their personality or views. At the other end of the scale, the guides could suggest challenging climbs to the capable but hesitant to encourage more climbing. Yet climbers were usually urban dwellers, often not New Zealanders, and only temporarily in the mountains. So it might be difficult for the guides to communicate their essential humility towards the peaks and their oneness with the mountain world, to those they guided.

In a guided climbing system, either guide or client was dominant, depending on situation. Even for men, mateship, that is, partnership based on simple equality and acceptance, was not the basis of relationships. The bond between guide and climber naturally varied according to personality and the duration of the climbing, but there was seldom parity between them in either a climbing or social sense. The result was that close male associations, which independent climbing in the 1890s had begun to develop, were not possible in guided climbing, though in the wider society they were becoming much more prominent through team sport and war. However, there was comradeship between guides, and, depending on the individuals involved, regular clients could develop an enjoyable partnership with their guides. Over the several seasons they climbed together, Australian Freda Du Faur, the first woman to become a skilled climber, and her usual guides, Peter and Alec Graham, developed a strong sense of commitment to each other as well as genuine affection.<sup>119</sup> Private guiding, sometimes in other mountain regions, also encouraged a more equal companionship and a closer relationship.

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<sup>119</sup> Du Faur p101,191-2



The establishment of guided climbing as the normal practice enabled women to climb, though in the wider society there was uncertainty about how adventurous and energetic they should be. After 1900 New Zealand women were increasingly involved in sporting and recreational activities. In the YWCA, in primary and girls' secondary schools, and more generally, there was some encouragement of physical activity for women.<sup>120</sup> However, women were limited by perceptions of femininity and female fragility, and clothing and chaperonage might also be restricting. Climbing was likely to be unacceptable because it was regarded as a rough and dangerous physical activity which involved getting dirty and sunburnt.<sup>121</sup> Men might be allowed to 'dice with death' but there could be derision and scorn for women who attempted to take part in 'male' recreation, perhaps because they threatened masculinity and the male pioneering image. The predominant view in the male-oriented society was that women were wives and mothers, servers and home makers, and upholders of 'civilisation'. Few women had the mental, social or economic freedom to venture into more remote areas for recreation, and in spite of developments in the mountains, climbing seemed to be not for women.

Yet the guides accepted women who ventured into the mountains, whether as holiday-makers, tourists or climbers. Attitudes at the Hermitage towards women climbing became more important for their participation in the recreation than public views. At one level, any client was a good client to the guides who wanted people to take up mountains for their own climbing satisfaction and to keep their jobs. The desire to include women in mountain

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<sup>120</sup> R Fry *It's different for daughters* Wellington 1985 p123-38; R Fry "Don't Let Down the Side" B Brookes C Macdonald M Tennant eds *Women in History* Wellington 1986 p101-117; S Coney *Every Girl* Auckland 1986 p161; J Malthus "Bifurcated and Not Ashamed" p32-46

<sup>121</sup> Du Faur p35-7,45,64,72,109-10,162-3. Trousers were almost essential for safety and ease of high climbing as women in Europe had already discovered. R Clark *The Victorian Mountaineers* p176; K McCrone *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women 1870-1914* London 1988 p216-72; W Unsworth *Hold the Heights* London 1993 p120

activity could also be used as an argument for better facilities.<sup>122</sup> Women's lack of athletic fitness might be a restriction for guides, though the subordinate place of women in society, which was also assumed in the mountains, perhaps made leading them a little easier. Women's expectations of what they could achieve in the mountains were often initially low. Though women often made their own choices about mountain recreation, guides did much to encourage women to be energetic and to aim high. They also changed public attitudes through their willingness to take women climbing. In 1903 a crossing of the Copland Pass by women had "caused quite a sensation",<sup>123</sup> but once a few, such as Annie Lindon, Freda Du Faur and Ada Julius, began to achieve high climbs between 1908 and 1911, the way was opened for more women to climb.<sup>124</sup>

Climbing offered its practitioners, whether clients or guides, a variety of enjoyments and rewards. For both climbers and guides there was a particular challenge and appeal in first ascents of which there was still considerable possibility. First ascents were a legitimate aim within climbing, and were the climbs most likely to be noted by the public. Bainbridge commented about Mt Blackburn: "The most important consideration with us...was that the...peak had never been previously ascended, and we thought it would be quite wrong to leave the district without making at least one new ascent."<sup>125</sup> The publicity-conscious Turner was interested in the glory of first ascents, and was annoyed when he thought his ambitions were being thwarted.<sup>126</sup> Peter Graham sought 'virgins' for a favourite and capable client such as Du Faur. The glory, especially in the public eye, might lie in first ascents, but as more were

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<sup>122</sup> Jack Clarke seemed to do this after the first women crossed Copland Pass - *AJHR* H-2 1903 xiv

<sup>123</sup> P Graham p70

<sup>124</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1908 p16, 1909 p14, 1913-18 Lists of Climbs; Du Faur p23,38-86; Andersen *South Canterbury* p674-711; P Graham p;159-65,173-7,189-95; *The New Zealand Climber* Summer 1993 No8 p22-3

<sup>125</sup> *AJ* XXII 1904-5 p110

<sup>126</sup> Turner *Conquest* p45-7

achieved and climbing developed, to climbers and guides the challenge of a difficult route became as important as the achievement of a first ascent. Many new ascents were made in the Mt Cook area between 1900 and 1920, and from 1908 climbers and guides also tackled major unclimbed peaks elsewhere in the Southern Alps.

Many of the significant ascents, especially in the 'Golden Age' 1908-1914, were made by a combination of New Zealand guides and visitors from overseas. Together they shaped mountain climbing and attitudes towards that recreation. Guides made it possible for visitors from overseas to take up climbing in New Zealand and many of the client climbers were Australians who lacked alpine peaks in their own country.<sup>127</sup> These outsiders seemed to suggest that climbing was not a sport for New Zealanders, except as guides, but there was little sign of local resentment at the achievements of people from other countries. Most of the climbers from overseas were 'British', wherever they were originally from, and, with few New Zealanders climbing,<sup>128</sup> the visitors were not usually perceived as a threat or competition. Though rugby rivalries were emerging, this was an imperialistic age and also a period of some Australasian collaboration in sport.<sup>129</sup> The New Zealand public might applaud 'conquest', but there was little desire for New Zealanders to climb their own mountains as an expression of emerging nationalism. The greatest of the visiting climbers, Freda Du Faur, was an Australian, but she was well accepted and is sometimes claimed for New Zealand.<sup>130</sup> The overseas climbers could be received with approval because they were temporary visitors who put themselves in the hands of New Zealand guides. It was the guides, though they only climbed over the summer, who were the real mountaineers with almost a monopoly on

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<sup>127</sup> The British tended to go to Canada for their overseas climbing 1900-1914 - P Hansen

<sup>128</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1908-9, 1913-4; *The Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Commerce and Tourists* 1912 p157; *ODT* 12 October 1912 p13; P Graham p171-91 *passim*

<sup>129</sup> New Zealand and Australia formed combined Davis Cup tennis teams 1905-14, and there were also Australasian Olympic teams in 1908 and 1912

<sup>130</sup> She features in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* Vol 3, 1996

mountain climbing knowledge and experience. The visitors could come, climb, and comment on the climbing world in New Zealand, but they remained outsiders who would have been unable to climb without the skill and enthusiasm of the local guides.

Thus, in New Zealand, the climbing dominance remained with the guides who offered continuity, security, and the possibility of achievement to all other climbers. They were the exemplars of climbing in New Zealand, who organised equipment and climbs, trained clients in techniques and led them up suitable mountains. Public agency had brought much more 'civilisation' into some mountain areas, notably the Mt Cook region. Against the background of an expanding society, a small number of guides and mountain visitors had together re-established high climbing and developed a new structure on which that activity could be based. Climbing was formalised in the mountains, where the guides took on considerable responsibility, and it was presented to the wider community, not as pioneering adventure, but as a safe and orderly recreation. Though the guide system was based on English climbing in the European Alps, a New Zealand pattern of guided climbing became so established that it dominated even climbers from overseas. There were other possible ways of climbing, but well before the First World War, the local guided model of climbing seemed to be based on a firm foundation of government support and the general approval of mountaineers and non-mountaineers alike.



## CHAPTER FIVE

GUIDED CLIMBING -  
CHALLENGED BUT DOMINANT 1900-1920

An outburst of sporting nationalism throughout the British Empire, in the early twentieth century, was largely expressed in New Zealand through rugby. Such nationalism often went hand in hand with a strengthening of imperial fervour. Between 1900 and 1914 climbing in New Zealand was one small strand of a much larger imperial activity,<sup>1</sup> but it was also developing its own local structures and practices. The ambiguity of this combination of imperialism and nationalism, and the development of climbing itself, created a complex and fluid situation. In spite of the mountain guide system, there came to be uncertainty within mountaineering as to how the recreation should be perceived and constituted. The sport of climbing had been transferred from England to New Zealand, and both the New Zealand Alpine Club of the 1890s and guided climbing after 1900 were based on English and European class-based models. In the traditional English pattern, guided climbing was a sport for the well-off who were often from outside New Zealand. Yet at the same time, climbing had begun to develop an independent local form in the 1880s and 1890s, and even in guided climbing there was domination by New Zealanders and a degree of independence from overseas patterns. Before the First World War some New Zealanders chose to climb without guides. This independent activity and the attempt to revive the NZAC in 1914 suggested that not all the middle-class climbers were happy with the leadership and domination of working-class guides, no matter how much they could be held up as examples of national manhood. However, developing independence and nationalism in climbing were not sufficient to bypass the model of the English Club and create a broader based mountain club. War prevented the formation of such an urban base for climbing, and the guides remained dominant.

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand climbing involved Australians. The English continued to climb in the European Alps, but many of them went to Canada for greater novelty. A few English and Canadian climbers visited New Zealand and at least four New Zealanders climbed in Britain or Europe

## FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT OF GUIDED CLIMBING

Guided climbing was accepted in New Zealand between 1900 and 1920 as the normal way to climb. The wider society saw guides as providing order and they seemed to guarantee that this dangerous activity could be pursued safely by all practitioners. The guide system was established as the visible and obvious means, indeed almost the only way, by which mountain visitors could be introduced to the higher peaks. Unlike in Europe, most guides in New Zealand were agents of the state. With their specialised skills and knowledge as well, they were clear, acceptable leaders and models for climbing. Most of the overseas visitors who made ascents during the 'Golden Age' 1907-1914 had not climbed before they came to the New Zealand mountains. If they were to achieve anything, they needed the guides to teach them the rudiments of the craft and to lead them on the peaks. This was the only system in existence by which beginners could gain tuition in climbing and build up both experience and achievement rapidly. Locals who began to climb might develop their own more independent experience but they also made use of both government and private guides because they realised progress would be made much more quickly with their assistance.

The guides were approved by the state and by overseas tourists as the experts with authority in the mountains, and all local mountain visitors acknowledged this too. Such was the mana acquired by Peter Graham and others<sup>2</sup> that the guiding service became a recognised institution, not just at the Hermitage but throughout New Zealand. Once the system was established and generally supported, it had to be accepted, because criticism of it or rebellion against it could be counter-productive, as Sam Turner discovered.<sup>3</sup> Another reason for acceptance of the dominance of the guides was more positive: if they controlled the system, they usually did so to help would-be mountaineers overcome

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<sup>2</sup> There were usually 4 to 6 climbing guides at the Hermitage in the years before the First World War,

<sup>3</sup> S Turner *The Conquest of the New Zealand Alps* London 1922 p45-7

problems and difficulties. Visitors to the mountains did not usually have time to develop great knowledge, skill or fitness, unless they returned regularly, so the capabilities of the guides made up for client inadequacies. The guides supplied the techniques, the fitness and the experience of mountain conditions to ensure a less fit and experienced climber could ascend peaks.

Exerting temporary human supremacy over mountains through climbing to their summits was consistent with the ideals of both nationalism and a wider imperialism. Once guiding was established it became clear that the guides' abilities and knowledge would lead to greater achievement for climbers, and their success was, for society, a vicarious 'conquest' of the landscape.

Achievement led to greater ambition. If first ascents were not possible, then the aim was higher or more difficult peaks because they were greater 'conquest' and would enhance personal prestige. Guides could not, of course, guarantee a peak to a client, but they markedly increased the chances of success, especially for inexperienced climbers. The quality of climbs in the Mt Cook region improved markedly between 1900 and 1914. The guides showed increasing self-confidence in their aspirations and leadership and in time there were enough experienced clients to allow the guides to keep developing as climbers themselves. Guides extended their activities and showed a range of mountain abilities elsewhere, in the bush as well as on the peaks. They led most of the successful exploratory climbing which occurred in the 'Golden Age' away from the Hermitage. A combination of ambitious climbers and skilled guides aided the development of more independent climbing in a wider range of mountains and expanded New Zealanders' knowledge of their own country.

Primarily mountain guiding won approval in New Zealand because it was useful, not because it fitted English concepts of class structure. Mountain recreationalists supported a service which, in practical terms, enabled them to reach the summits and better pursue their recreation. A group of beginners could learn together, but, like Mannering and Dixon in the 1880s, the achievement would be limited till equipment, skill, knowledge and experience



was built up. Most climbers, whatever their background and experience, both needed and expected to be able to employ guides to enhance the achievement and safety of their climbing. Many were middle-aged and they were all relatively well-off, through their employment or inherited wealth, but otherwise they showed considerable diversity. There were New Zealand climbers and visitors from overseas, some longer term than others. They might be male or female, married or unmarried, experienced or inexperienced. Some wanted a holiday in the mountains with the occasional climb; others were ambitious for the summits, seeking as many as possible. A few looked to peaks away from the Mt Cook region in addition to their climbing from the Hermitage, but most did not even think of climbing without guides.

Climbers from the early years of the century, or even before, chose to use guides on returning to active mountaineering. Many had themselves been capable of achievement without guides, but with them the possibilities were greater. Claude Macdonald, who had been so important in the re-establishment of climbing and the creation of guiding in 1903, came from Australia in early 1909 but was again unsuccessful on Mt Cook, though with Peter Graham and Jim Murphy he made several ascents of other peaks.<sup>4</sup> When the pioneer of the 1880s, George Mannering, had two attempts on Mt Cook in early 1913 with his wife Lucy, he employed guides to assist them because of her inexperience and to ensure her safety, though he made guideless attempts himself. Successful climbs by the Mannerings were all guided.<sup>5</sup> Dr Ebenezer Teichelmann continued to climb after the Rev Newton left New Zealand in 1907, but, in his late forties and unable to carry much because of his size, he needed guides. Indeed they helped him to continue his explorations and pioneering climbs into his fifties.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> AJHR H-2 1909 p14; P Graham p178-82

<sup>5</sup> AJHR H-2 1913 p5; Andersen *South Canterbury* p680,712; Mannering *Eighty Years* p90-1

<sup>6</sup> AJHR H-2 1909 p14, 1914 p6; NZAJ 1923 p175-90; P Graham p179-80; Graham & Wilson p91,103

Both experienced and inexperienced climbers from further afield were also willing to conform to New Zealand ways of climbing. Guides enabled visiting climbers to fit quickly into the local climbing scene and achieve significant ascents without long preparatory periods. Dr F Vollman, an archaeologist in Peru who belonged to the German and Swiss Alpine Clubs, made first ascents of Mts Green and Walter on 13 February 1909 with Dr Teichelmann, Peter and Alec Graham.<sup>7</sup> A capable English climber, Lawrence Earle, was the client for an ascent of Mt Cook on 4 March 1909 which used a new, mainly rock route from the Hooker glacier directly to the summit.<sup>8</sup> Earle stayed in New Zealand for some time and on 23 December 1909 he was joined by his novice compatriot, Captain Bernard Head, on the second ascent of Mt Sefton by a new route from the west.<sup>9</sup> After he settled in Wellington in 1911, Sam Turner stood out among the client climbers by reason of his great ambitions. To fulfil his aims of first ascents and to satisfy his hopes of 'conquest' he needed guides. Though most people disliked Turner's self-centredness, his drive and energy put pressure on the guides to achieve more difficult climbs, and gave him success.<sup>10</sup>

Most women were less ambitious, but, as in Europe, guides were even more necessary to them. An increasing number of women chose to climb but for social and practical reasons it was impossible for them to do so without male assistance. It was logical for women to use guides since they were the most skilled male climbers, and their services were available on request at the Hermitage where many women first visited the mountains. Women who wished to climb found it necessary to use guides, and thus supported their

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<sup>7</sup> AJHR H-2 1909 p14; Andersen p700-1; P Graham p179-80

<sup>8</sup> AJHR H-2 1909 p14; P Graham p183-4. Jack Clarke was private guide to Earle and the Graham brothers accompanied them on a separate rope.

<sup>9</sup> Press 22 January 1910 p11; Andersen p686. Jack Clarke and Alec Graham were the guides.

<sup>10</sup> NA 1910/18; ODT 12 October 1912 p13; AJHR H-2 1913 p5, 1914, 1915 p6, 1916 p5-6; D Theomin PP letter 14 March 1914; Turner *Conquest* p15-137 passim; P Graham p216-8. Turner's need for guides and porters enabled 18 year-old George Bannister, a part-Maori from the West Coast, to climb in 1912, and he became the first Maori to climb high, including Mt Cook on 27 February.

existence. All involved, whether men or women, expected the latter to be dependent on the former in the mountains, which meant little threat to ideals of masculinity. In conformity with usual social roles, the guides did all the leading, but they also had to be the labourers because the work required was probably physically beyond the women. In line with these expectations, women's ice axes were light, designed for balance, and hardly capable of cutting steps. Two guides was the recognised requirement for all high peaks, especially for women, and women who were given some responsibility on a climb initially found the experience unnerving. However, climbing in pairs became more common and, as women gained experience, combinations of one guide and one woman occurred more frequently. Greater independence than this for climbing women was hardly possible at this time.<sup>11</sup>

Guides not only made it possible for women to climb, but they seemed to make climbing a safe and therefore a socially acceptable activity for women. Not all notions of Victorian and Edwardian respectability could be conformed to in the mountains but neither were they ignored. The government had always provided women's rooms in the mountain huts near the Hermitage. Guides also helped resolve two other major difficulties for respectable middle-class women: chaperonage and dress. Peter Graham did not enforce trousers for women, but he permitted and encouraged them. By the First World War trousers were acceptable to both men and women as dress for climbing women, though at the Hermitage and the lower mountain huts they wore skirts to maintain femininity.<sup>12</sup> The characters of Peter and Alec Graham were beyond reproach, so for women who visited the New Zealand mountains, guides became acceptable not just as servants but as companions, substituting for husbands, brothers and other women. Chaperonage of women in the

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<sup>11</sup> Du Faur p117-9,137-8,140-1,154-6,219-20

<sup>12</sup> Freda Du Faur wore a short skirt over trousers, Du Faur p49-50 & facing p156; WP 1 May 1912 photo on summit of Mt Dampier. Then and later women wore skirts in the lower huts - P Temple *Castles in the Air* photo p52 (1910), NZAJ 1943 photo facing p26 (1920). But after Du Faur, even older women like Jane Thomson (photos Kennedy Collection Canterbury Museum 12321,13154) and Margaret Lorimer (photo Hocken MS1163/53), wore trousers for their climbing.

mountains became much less of an issue for both men and women between 1900 and 1920, to the point where a woman could spend a night alone with a guide or guides, though young single women might be careful to be in parties totalling more than two.<sup>13</sup>

Guides enabled and encouraged a few women to make high climbs in the Mt Cook region from 1909. Those who did so achieved considerable feats and served as models for others. The number of women climbing was greatest during the First World War, but before that a woman had become the leading client climber of the period.<sup>14</sup> As a visitor from Sydney, Freda Du Faur fell in love with the mountains of the Mt Cook area and wished to reach their snowy summits,<sup>15</sup> but she would have been unable to achieve that ambition without assistance. The potential threat she posed to male climbers was negated because she had to use guides and thus put herself in a subordinate role. She became a favourite client not just because of her personality but because she offered opportunities of leadership and achievement to the guides. She developed into a skilled climber who set new standards which seemed attainable only with accomplished guides. Notable was her ascent of Mt Cook with Peter and Alec Graham on 3 December 1910, the first by a woman. She made light work of Earle's route thanks to her temperament, rock climbing ability acquired in Australia, and two guides at the height of their powers. She made many other new and difficult climbs, including Mt Tasman and a first traverse of Mt Sefton, and she built up a climbing record surpassed only by a few guides. The greatest feat for both Du Faur and her guides, Peter Graham and Darby

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<sup>13</sup> ODT 12 October 1912 p13; D Theomin PP letters 31 March 1914 & 7 December 1919 suggest a change in her attitude; Du Faur p102,117; F Roberts p106-9,128-39; Andersen p675; P Graham p204-5

<sup>14</sup> Annie Lindon, an Englishwoman from near Melbourne, was the first, followed by Freda Du Faur and Ada Julius, 1909-10 - *AJHR* H-2 1906-1919; Du Faur *passim*; P Graham p141-212 *passim*; Graham & Wilson p111-21; *NZAJ* 1945 p72-3, 1955 p225-7; *NZAJ* 1993 p99-105

<sup>15</sup> Du Faur p27-29

Thomson, was the first Grand Traverse of Mt Cook on 3 January 1913. This climb was seen not just as a major achievement for Du Faur but as a triumph for the skill and safe practices of the guides and guided climbing.<sup>16</sup>

New Zealanders also began to take up climbing as a recreation in the years before the First World War, and they too found guides distinctly helpful. Most local mountaineers spent some time climbing with guides because of the tuition and assistance they offered, at a time when there was no mountain club to instruct or bring climbers together. However, the New Zealanders did not always climb with guides, and the use they made of guides varied. In the Mt Cook region guided climbing was accepted as the norm, but in other mountain ranges there was greater flexibility. Those who began their climbing in independent fashion elsewhere, might subsequently use guides to improve mountain skills and knowledge. Climbing first with guides at the Hermitage led to the acquisition of proficiency which could create and support a desire to climb peaks in other places, both with and without guides. Whatever the sequence, the training role of the guides was important to the New Zealand climbers, and with the help of guides many climbers began to develop mountain independence.

Three of the most significant New Zealand climbers of the period all spent time at the Hermitage and employed guides there, though, in the more flexible situation which was developing, they also showed varying degrees of independence. Hugh Chambers, from a sheep station in Hawkes Bay, became a regular visitor to the Hermitage from the 1912-13 season, often with his sister and cousin.<sup>17</sup> Chambers, rated highly as a climber by Peter Graham, later did some guideless climbing, but he preferred not to carry a load and so usually

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<sup>16</sup> ODT 19 April 1912, 9 October 1912 p5; *Press* 23 April 1912 p2, 31 May 1913 p8, 14 June 1913; OW 1 May 1912 p72; *AJHR* H-2 1913 p5; Du Faur *passim*; P Graham p189-95; Graham & Wilson p111-21. Sam Turner was jealous of the apparent priority given to Du Faur - Turner *Conquest* p45-7

<sup>17</sup> Irene Chambers and Beatrice Holdsworth, both climbers.

depended on guides.<sup>18</sup> Another more dynamic figure, Jim Dennistoun from Peel Forest station in South Canterbury, did less climbing from the Hermitage but more elsewhere. He too normally employed guides, though on both climbs and expeditions the initiative was generally his. He was capable of being independent in the mountains, but his sister and a friend, Ada Julius, often accompanied him, which may explain some of his reliance on guides.<sup>19</sup> A developing group of Dunedin climbers, of whom Frank Wright was the most prominent,<sup>20</sup> made less consistent use of guides because they climbed in two mountain regions, in north-west Otago and the Mt Cook area. They seldom used guides in their 'local' mountains, but at the Hermitage they were rarely without such assistance. Often they employed private guides, which gave more climbing choice and possibility of partnership, but the guides were still employed for their knowledge, skills and leadership.<sup>21</sup>

In response to demand from both New Zealand and overseas clients, guides expanded their role. They became leaders in mountain ranges away from the Mt Cook region which required them to show a much wider variety of mountain skills. In remote valleys and on peaks whose routes of ascent were unknown, the guides were explorers as well as climbers. They not only extended their expertise and enhanced their position in the growing climbing community, but they helped expand the mountain frontier and the scope of climbing. While the idea and original organisation usually stemmed from a client climber, the guide was employed to do the practical work, such as organising load-carrying to a base camp, finding routes up valleys through

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<sup>18</sup> NZAJ 1921 p67-74, 1922 p115-8, 1953 p296-99; P Graham p142. Chambers climbed with guides in Europe 1912 - letter H Chambers to AP Harper 27 July 1914 in "The Revival of the NZAC 1914-5" NZAC Arch

<sup>19</sup> J Dennistoun Journal G Buchanan PP CMA; AJHR H-2 1913 p5; Andersen p678-712 *passim*; unknown newspaper 7 October 1916 WAK p59; NZAJ 1921 p89-90 (inaccurate); P Graham p156,171-3; *The New Zealand Climber* No 8 Summer 1993 p22-3

<sup>20</sup> See below. Wright climbed with guides in Europe 1912 - NZAJ 1923 p191-6, 1939 p123

<sup>21</sup> The Otago climbers often employed Jack Clarke and Jim Murphy, sometimes Tom Fyfe - ODT 12 October 1912 p13; AJHR H-2 1913 p5, 1914 p5, 1915 p5-6; Andersen p687-8,700; NZAJ 1955 p224; J Wilson p233

bush and onto peaks, establishing camps in all sorts of places, as well as actually leading on the peaks. This did not make for cheap climbing, but since the use of guides was accepted as the proper way to climb, it was natural to use them for all mountain expeditions, and they proved their worth in the ascent of more remote summits.

The Hermitage guides were tied to that establishment and the mountains near it because they were employees of the Tourist Department, but as climbing developed and the demand for guides grew, private guiding became possible. Though it was more part time and less secure employment than at the Hermitage, there was a varying number of private guides available to travel to other mountains. Jack Clarke became a prominent private guide after he retired from the Hermitage in 1906. Alec Graham, based at Waiho Gorge, often crossed over to the Hermitage to act as a private guide there, and he also looked further afield at the request of clients.<sup>22</sup> Others who had retired from guiding for the Tourist Department also operated as private guides and made significant expeditions and ascents.<sup>23</sup> Without a guide, a climber needed several companions of reasonable competence and experience, and this was seldom possible. Just as guides in the Mt Cook region overcame client inexperience, so further afield they increased the chances of successful exploration. The high success rate of the actual climbing on exploratory expeditions suggests the skills and leadership of the guides were also significant on the peaks. No matter how much valuable exploration was done, the summits were the ultimate aims. Guides might help motivate a party towards ascents which would give more tangible kudos for their efforts than exploration provided.

More remote guided climbing differed from that based on the Hermitage. In other mountain settings there was less 'civilisation' in the form of huts, tracks and known routes, and in such places climbers had the opportunity to become

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<sup>22</sup> Graham & Wilson p111-21,123,174

<sup>23</sup> Tom Fyfe and Jim Murphy were prominent examples.

independent even of guides. The mountains might be a little smaller, but access was more difficult, so the initial focus had to be exploratory, and an expeditionary approach was needed to allow time for discovery. In a party there was usually only one guide, but sometimes several clients, so there was no guide dominance in numerical terms. The middle-class climbers had to do more of the packing, setting up camp, route-finding, and labour on climbs than they would have done in the Mt Cook region. This resulted in much greater equality and learning through shared experience, and a growing sense of partnership, though this depended on personalities and on how much the leading client expected the guide to be a servant. Relationships were simpler because no women were involved in this sort of guided climbing.<sup>24</sup> Both sexes were doing more climbing with guides in the Mt Cook region, but a gender division marked exploratory climbing in more remote ranges. It was usually much further from 'civilisation', it was often very energetic, and was the sort of pioneering not expected of women.

Exploration and climbs which brought a wider range of mountains and valleys to the attention of climbers, led to the development of a cumulative experience which was essential for the growth of New Zealand climbing. In the Hermitage area the guides dominated all aspects of mountaineering, but elsewhere both first- and second-hand knowledge and experience became more widely available. The successful ascent of Mt Aspiring (9950ft) by Jack Clarke, Alec Graham and Bernard Head from the west Matukituki valley on 23 November 1909<sup>25</sup> led to considerable exploration and climbing in north west Otago. This occurred not just in the Matukituki valley but also in re-exploration of the nearby Rees and Dart valleys at the head of Lake Wakatipu. Head was involved in much of the subsequent exploration and climbing, with guides, but

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<sup>24</sup> Ada Julius and Barbara Dennistoun accompanied Jim Dennistoun, Lawrence Earle and Jack Clarke up the Rangitata river in 1910, but they were not involved in any of the climbing - J Dennistoun *Journal CMA*; T N Beckett *The Mountains of Erewhon* Wellington 1978 photos between p36-7, p39-40, 97-8

<sup>25</sup> *Press* 18 December 1909; Graham & Wilson p97-9. Date often given as 1910, eg W S Gilkison *Aspiring* Christchurch 1951 p24



guideless activity in the same area was also stimulated.<sup>26</sup> Similar climbing elsewhere seemed to occur in greater isolation, perhaps because it was not widely publicised. Guides were used in the headwaters of the Rakaia and Rangitata rivers where the confused topography made location of the peaks difficult. There was a slow increase in knowledge, but access to the attractive mountain zone was not easy. So the peaks there did not immediately become the focus for a group of climbers who could build on each other's knowledge as happened in Otago.<sup>27</sup>

Before the First World War mountain guides were the premier climbers, and so they dominated climbing throughout New Zealand. They were acknowledged as the experts by beginners and experienced climbers alike, whether from New Zealand or overseas, and they were useful to all climbers as tutors and as leaders of expeditions. They encouraged an increase in the amount of climbing and led the move towards more difficult peaks and routes. Guides, especially the more independent private ones, also did much to extend the scope of mountain climbing in New Zealand and to reveal potential for the future away from the Hermitage. The use of guides in more remote areas extended their role, and helped make a wider range of mountains familiar to New Zealand mountaineers.

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<sup>26</sup> Head's major climb was Mt Edward with Jack Clarke and C Ferrier on 11 March 1914. Frank Wright and John Robertson were the most prominent independent climbers - *OW* 11 February 1914, *ODT* 9 March 1914 p3; "The Revival of the NZAC 1914-5" *NZAC Arch* - Head qualifications for membership; *NZAJ* 1921 p9-13, 20-3, 86-9, 1939 p47-9, 118-23, 1948 p245, 1955 p224-5

<sup>27</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1909 p13-14, 1914 p5; "An Expedition to the Glaciers of the Rangitata in 1910 Mr Earle's Notes" *CMA*; *Press* 23 April 1910 p7; *ODT* 12 October 1912 p13; *J Dennistoun Journal* *CMA*; Andersen p708-9, 714-5; *NZAJ* 1921 p49-52, 1923 p169-178, 182-190; P Graham p171-3; Beckett p53-4, 56, 121

## CHALLENGES TO GUIDED CLIMBING

The dominance of guides between 1900 and 1920 did not prevent the development, in the same period, of some mountain activity without guides. Independent mountaineering not only challenged the place of the guides in climbing, but also began what was later to develop into a New Zealand form of guideless climbing, based on exploration in the mountains. This was comparatively independent of imperial models. Guided climbing was part of a movement of 'civilisation' into the mountains which assisted the growth of climbing, but some people sought, in the mountains, greater independence, freedom and personal development than guides allowed. Sharing the organisation and leadership with other climbers of similar ability and experience could be more satisfying than being led by guides up mountains. As climbing became more common, the total mountain experience, including all the necessary decision-making, took on greater significance. Summit achievement and first ascents remained important, but independence from guides also came to be valued. There was a slowly developing awareness that the guided system was not entirely suited to pioneering male colonials and value was seen in the wider range of skills required by independent explorer-mountaineers and the challenges they might face.

One major factor which discouraged the use of guides was inherent in the guided system itself and in the pioneering do-it-yourself attitudes New Zealanders prided themselves on possessing. As guides taught climbers, the latter became more skilled and knowledgeable and, for some men, one natural result of the acquisition of mountain competence was to climb without guides. As the number of climbers grew, they could find companionship, enjoyment and progress in mountain recreation through creating their own groups and sharing the skills and knowledge they possessed. Psychological independence from guides was more likely away from the Hermitage where established systems of climbing hardly existed and new patterns of exploratory climbing on smaller mountains were emerging by 1914. For some New Zealand climbers

there was a conscious search for greater challenge and a desire for freedom from an approved norm. This was not a desire to do away with guides but a wish to go beyond their leadership and authority to a more autonomous recreation. Initially both exploration and guideless climbing might limit achievement, but the longer term gain for the mountaineer was more independence and the development of skills which in time led to greater and more satisfying accomplishment.

In spite of the increasing movement of 'civilisation' into mountain areas, climbing parties, especially those without guides, left much of the structured order of society and family behind. On a temporary basis, climbers deliberately removed themselves from an increasingly set, organised and comfortable life to spend time in more primitive living conditions, in difficult, sometimes dangerous physical activity. Individual choice was significant in independent mountaineering which developed as a much more private activity than guided climbing. On their own, climbers were restricted only by the natural world and their own limitations of imagination, fitness, equipment and experience. The comparative freedom of climbing, and the aesthetic pleasures of the natural environment, all appealed to some climbers. Against a background of an increasingly stable urban society, danger could be exciting rather than disturbing. A few were attracted by the hard physical work needed to gain the summits, and more by the sense of achievement which successful ascents would bring. Climbing and exploration could also satisfy curiosity about relatively unknown parts of the natural world which were of interest to some New Zealanders. Though climbing was still a barely acceptable recreation to the wider society, independent climbers found, in their remote recreation, adventure worth experiencing.

Four groups or categories of more independent mountaineers emerged between 1900 and 1920. They suggested different possibilities of climbing, and implicitly questioned the domination of guided climbing. This was no overt assertion of general independence or national pride in the face of a model

imported from overseas, but a practical response to individual desires and situations. There was a willingness to accept risk and take greater personal responsibility in chosen mountain ranges. Away from the Hermitage, New Zealand mountaineers sought to climb without guides in two different ways. A few explored and learnt to climb entirely by their own efforts, without any use of guides. Others combined guided and guideless climbing, asserting their independence but also making use of the tuition and leadership of the 'professionals'. In the Mt Cook area where guideless climbing was much less likely, two other groups did some independent climbing, with and without the approval of the guides. Occasionally climbers from overseas chose to ignore the guides, though this foreign example seemed an aberration. However, later in the period, during the First World War but not because of it, there was some guideless climbing by experienced local climbers. In addition to such developments, one overseas guide showed individual initiative which supported these different approaches to climbing.

There were always a few mountaineers who continued the nineteenth century tradition of independent pioneering and chose not to use guides for their exploration and climbing. William Grave, a teacher and then lawyer of Oamaru, was the most prominent of a group which devoted attention to Fiordland. With various companions,<sup>28</sup> he explored to the north-west of Lake Te Anau from the late 1890s. The weather, the rugged terrain and their inexperience caused problems and for many years climbing was a secondary objective.<sup>29</sup> Other climbers such as Edgar Williams also found a suitable challenge in the Fiordland peaks which offered a variety of exploration and first ascents unattractive to many by reason of their lesser height and difficult

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<sup>28</sup> A Charles Gifford, Alfred Grenfell, Thomas Hunter, Bert Lyttle, Arthur Talbot, his most frequent companions.

<sup>29</sup> The first significant climb was not till January 1911 (Mt Balloon from MacKinnon Pass on the Milford Track by Grave, Talbot & Lyttle). After that Grave used guides for his pre-war climbing at the Hermitage (The Footstool 10 April 1912, ODT 12 October 1912 p13), and in Fiordland (Mt Pembroke December 1913 with Talbot & guide Jack Lippe) - Crozier *Beyond the Southern Lakes* p23-8, 51, 99-109; Hall-Jones *Fiordland Explored* p101-4

approaches.<sup>30</sup> Exploration and climbing also began elsewhere in more accessible mountains with terrain which provided more straightforward climbing. The Arthur's Pass area held much potential quite close to Christchurch, as was discovered in the 1920s, and investigation of climbing possibilities there began just before the war when the railway brought 'civilisation' closer.<sup>31</sup> Mountaineers from both Greymouth and Christchurch, often with little experience, found they could safely explore and climb near Arthur's Pass without guides,<sup>32</sup> though the war limited development.<sup>33</sup> Another small group, most of whom were teachers, began climbing the Godley glacier peaks at the end of 1916.<sup>34</sup> There was also new mountaineering development in the Tongariro National Park from about 1910. The Mead brothers were prominent in this, especially before the war, and Horace Holl, an Englishman living in Auckland, did much during the war to show how the area could later be used for a great variety of mountain recreations.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Williams and Jack Murrell, a Milford Track guide, climbed a number of peaks in 1914: Mts Balloon, Hart & Wilmur and Mitre Peak - OW 15 April 1914 p32; NZAJ 1974 p108-9. They hoped to do more, but were limited by the war to brief exploration and a climb of Mt Elliot in February 1917 - OW 25 April 1917 p80; NZAJ 1974 p108-9

<sup>31</sup> Midland Railway reached Arthur's Pass township in 1914 - anon. *The Story of the Midland Railway* Christchurch 1923 p109-11

<sup>32</sup> Mt Rolleston first climbed 1912 - R Odell *Handbook of the Arthur Pass National Park* Christchurch 1935 p84. Climbing visits by: George Dennistoun, AP Harper and his cousin Eric Harper, an All Black and NZ athletic champion, April 1912; Edgar Williams and others several times 1912-3; Greymouth group: Frank Kitchingham & Charles Ward twice 1913 with Claude Chalk then Arthur Talbot - G Dennistoun MS Papers 3577 ATL; *Press* 17 January 1913 p3, 28 February 1913 p8, 15 March 1913 p4; NZAJ 1922 p119-23; Harper *Memories* p169-70; F A Kitchingham "Trip Diary" cited in J M Acheson "Behind the Snowy Mountains" MA Thesis History CU 1961; CM 1966 p23-5, 1991 p60

<sup>33</sup> *Press* 7 March 1916 p8

<sup>34</sup> Tom Fletcher, Will Kennedy and Edgar Williams were the most prominent in a series of expeditions 1916-1924 - NZAJ 1921 p25-37, 91-99, 1922 p143-57, 1923 p203-19, 1925 p240-47. Williams and Kennedy had long associations with mountaineering - CM 1945 p11-23, 1951 p127-9; NZAJ 1951 p118-21, 1974 p104-13, 1983 p178-9

<sup>35</sup> Holl was a teacher who encouraged others to join in his mountain activities: camping, tramping, skiing, and rock, snow and ice climbing - M Lorimer application for NZAC membership 1922 NZAC Arch; NZ *Herald* 30 May 1927 p8; NZAJ 1945 p69; J Graham *Ruapehu* p25, 27, 29; W Mead *Memories of a Mountain* p9-18

Other New Zealanders went climbing in similar fashion in remote ranges, but they also chose to use guides, especially in the Mt Cook area, to gain the skills and experience for their more independent climbing elsewhere. One individual example was Jim Dennistoun. After his guided high climbing in 1910-11 he crossed the Milford Track. Inspired by the appearance of Mitre Peak at Milford Sound, he made the first ascent of it on 13 March 1911.<sup>36</sup> This became a solo ascent which Dennistoun enjoyed, though he was aware of the pressure, largely generated by guided climbing, against such a practice.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, much of the unguided activity in north-west Otago between 1910 and 1914 came from a group of Dunedin climbers. At the Hermitage they employed guides, but not in Otago where they were the most independent New Zealand mountaineers of the time. Frank Wright became the most skilled and experienced of perhaps ten climbers who explored and climbed their 'local' mountains and gave each other support and companionship.<sup>38</sup> Though most were men of some means and many were not young, they enjoyed their climbing without guides.<sup>39</sup> Outside encouragement came from one visit by Sam Turner in 1913<sup>40</sup> and the guided expeditions of Bernard Head. Some Otago climbers joined these visitors, but they more often made up their own parties. As well as climbing known peaks, like the East Peak of Mt Earnslaw, they made pioneering ascents. A significant

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<sup>36</sup> Dennistoun climbed four 10,000ft peaks and attempted Mt Cook with Ada Julius and guide Jack Clarke (Andersen p700,702,705). Then he crossed the Milford Track with his sister Barbara and a visitor Rhoda Williams from England. Dennistoun confused the date, writing 1910 in OW7 February 1912 (cited in G Moir *Guide Book to the...Great Southern Lakes* Dunedin 1925 p18 and reprinted NZAJ 1956 p406-11). R Williams Diary CMA makes it clear the year was 1911. A year and a day earlier he was making a first ascent of Mt D'Archiac at the head of the Godley glacier.

<sup>37</sup> NZAJ 1956 p409. Dennistoun intelligently used rubber-soled shoes on the "final rocky slabs".

<sup>38</sup> Alex Duncan, Harold Hodgkinson, J K H Inglis, Jack Murrell, John Robertson, Jim Simpson, R N Vanes, Joseph Walker and Frank Wright were the most active.

<sup>39</sup> Wright, a merchant, and Robertson, an Inspector of Schools, were in their forties when they began climbing. Inglis was Professor of Chemistry, Duncan a lawyer, Vanes an architect - "Revival of the NZAC 1914-5" NZAC Arch; NZAJ 1936 p387, 1939 p118-9, 1955 p224

<sup>40</sup> As often happened with Turner there was an argument after he climbed Mt Aspiring with three Otago climbers - OW Christmas number 1913 & 31 December 1913, 14,21 January & 18 February 1914; *Press* 24 March 1913; unknown newspaper WAK p26-7; Turner *Conquest* p54-70

rock climb on a high peak came when Frank Wright and John Robertson made a first ascent the much more difficult West Peak of Mt Earnslaw (9250ft) on 7 February 1914.<sup>41</sup>

A small group of climbers from overseas, who holidayed in the Mt Cook area early in 1914, showed it was possible to climb there without guides. Franz Malcher, an Austrian who had done some climbing in Europe, came from Australia to climb with his younger brother Julius and later E Ranft. Franz Malcher's account does not make it clear why he chose to climb without guides, but he enjoyed the challenges of leadership and route-finding.<sup>42</sup> With his experience he could see many moderate peaks in the Mt Cook area which he and his less skilled companions could attempt. On two climbs Franz Malcher completed the ascents alone, and the trio demonstrated more ambitious possibilities in a traverse of the Main Divide from Copland Pass south over Mts Madonna, Du Faur and Cadogan to The Footstool (9073ft) on 21st February 1914.<sup>43</sup> How acceptable these climbs were to other mountaineers or the guides is uncertain. Perhaps foreigners and temporary visitors could be different from the norm. Accepted or not, the Malcher climbs did show that guideless climbing in the Mt Cook region was possible for those who had acquired experience on other mountains. Yet climbing without guides was most unlikely. There were a few unguided ascents 1914-5 when there were hardly any guides at the Hermitage,<sup>44</sup> but independence was not a trend the guides could approve of because it affected their livelihood. An increase in guide numbers from late 1915 reinforced the norm of guided climbing.

The development of climbing experience and confidence through repeated mountain visits did lead a few New Zealand climbers to seek more personal

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<sup>41</sup> NZAJ 1921 p10,20-24, 1931 p148-9, 1955 p224-5. For a minor example of this Otago climbing see NZAJ 1967 p198

<sup>42</sup> F Malcher "In the Mountains of New Zealand" 1934, translated by J Malcher 1970

<sup>43</sup> AJHR H-2 1914 p5; Andersen p688-9,704,708; F Malcher; *Press* 5 March 1977 p13

<sup>44</sup> AJHR H-2 1915 p5-6

challenges without guides in the Mt Cook area. Guides also became aware of the competence of climbers, and such was the number of client climbers later in the First World War that there were occasions when guides were not available and climbers took responsibility for themselves. Sam Turner, looking for a new challenge, began solo climbing in 1915. This culminated in a solo ascent of Mt Cook on 6 March 1919,<sup>45</sup> but such independence, while tolerated, was regarded as idiosyncratic by guides and other climbers alike. Late in the war there was some guideless climbing in the Mt Cook region, often led by Horace Holl, who was by then experienced in New Zealand mountaineering.<sup>46</sup> He and his parties chose to climb without guides, but Peter Graham seems to have recognised their capability and sanctioned the guideless ascents. In fact the climbs were usually of peaks Holl had already ascended, and he took the role of a guide, as he did on Mt Ruapehu in the North Island.<sup>47</sup>

Independent climbing was also encouraged by the individualistic approach of Conrad Kain who was the one overseas mountain guide to visit New Zealand between 1900 and 1920. Kain called into question existing practices and showed how even within guided climbing there could be greater variety. Reaction to his presence eventually revealed how entrenched the guided system of climbing at the Hermitage had become. Originally from Austria, Conrad Kain came from Canada for the 1913-4 season with his client, Otto Frind. As a pair independent of Hermitage guides, they were able to climb largely as they wished, and they showed what sorts of climbing possibilities still remained in the Mt Cook area.<sup>48</sup> The next season Kain was employed by the Tourist

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<sup>45</sup> Mt Sealy 24 Feb 1915, Anzacs (both) 6 Feb 1917, Aiguilles Rouges 22 Feb 1917, Footstool 1 Feb 1918, Nathan 20 Feb 1918 - *AJHR* H-2 1915, 1917, 1918, 1919, p6; Turner *Conquest* p99-197 passim

<sup>46</sup> He came to New Zealand about 1912, already with climbing experience, and climbed on Mt Ruapehu and in the Southern Alps during the war - *AJHR* H-2 1916 p5, 1917 p6; *NZ Herald* 30 May 1927 p8

<sup>47</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1918 p5-6. See note 35 above.

<sup>48</sup> *OW* 15 April 1914 p32; *Press* 16 April 1914; *AJHR* H-2 1914 p5-7; H O Frind & J Andersen "The Southern Alps of New Zealand" MS (ascents list) NZAC Arch; Andersen p675,679-85,687,703,705-6,709-10; C Kain *Where the Clouds Can Go* 1935,



Department. It was as a private guide in his third season 1915-6 that difficulties arose.<sup>49</sup> He was more attractive and outgoing in personality than the other guides, but he was not under the jurisdiction of the Hermitage system and so he came to be seen as a threat. Furthermore, his speed on the mountains and his love of the unknown disturbed the set ways of climbing in the Mt Cook region. He showed the imagination to explore and climb different peaks which was evident in independent climbers elsewhere in New Zealand.<sup>50</sup>

In all he did, Kain suggested that there should be greater freedom and variety in climbing. This led to him being regarded as suspect in terms of the standards and practices of New Zealand guiding.<sup>51</sup> His Grand Traverse of Mt Cook on 31 January 1916, with 59 year old Jane Thomson and no second guide, seemed dangerous.<sup>52</sup> Then came, as Kain wrote:

the extraordinary action of the Tourist Department in warning off private guides from the Southern Alps. I have been officially informed by the Department that I shall not be allowed in these mountains again. They will not supply any explanation of their strange action.<sup>53</sup>

The private guide issue was an excuse concealing the real reason. Kain's prohibition resulted from his considerable success, not from what sort of guide he was or the way he climbed. He became unpopular because he attracted clients away from government guides, and because of his long list of 'firsts'. He was too successful, threatening the livelihood of other guides and arousing jealousy among them. Kain's dismissal, very likely requested by Peter Graham,

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reprint Boston 1954 p322-41; NZAJ 1934 p470-1, 1975 p118-121, 1979 p70-3. In Canada climbing was also at an exploration and first ascents stage.

<sup>49</sup> AJHR H-2 1915 p5-6, 1916 p4-6; Kain p344-68

<sup>50</sup> He enjoyed traverses of mountains at least as much as new routes and first ascents. He preferred to climb in a pair which was faster than the traditional three on a rope.

<sup>51</sup> Kain p349 quoting Harper; NZAJ 1945 p73, 1953 p287 (P Graham citing Tom Fyfe), 1975 p121

<sup>52</sup> Definitely a Grand Traverse. *Lyttelton Times* 17 February 1916 WAK p56; AJHR 1916 p4-5; J Thomson NZAJ 1921 p14-19; Kain p360-8. J Wilson p178,233 does not record ascent of Low Peak.

<sup>53</sup> Kain p359

made it clear that his style of independent guided climbing was not to be imitated in New Zealand, and that the existing guide system was beginning to limit its activity.<sup>54</sup>

If the New Zealand guides had shown some of the enterprise of Conrad Kain they might have cemented a position for themselves at the forefront of climbing developments in New Zealand. Private guides had shown they were quite capable of exploratory climbing. However, away from the Hermitage, the initiative lay with 'amateur' New Zealanders who, by the time the First World War broke out, were establishing their own climbing patterns. The independent activity of New Zealand climbers contrasted with the guided climbing structure which so much served overseas visitors. The possibilities found in Tongariro National Park, at Arthur's Pass, and further south in the Otago and Fiordland mountains, suggested that climbing was also an indigenous recreation. In particular, the number of climbers in Dunedin and Christchurch grew to such an extent that an urban formalisation of climbing, quite distinct from the guide service, seemed appropriate before the First World War.

#### A REVIVED NZAC - AN ALTERNATIVE FORMALISATION

In 1914 efforts to bring climbers together and to form an organisation for the recreation resulted in a revival of the New Zealand Alpine Club.<sup>55</sup> Guided climbing had asserted some New Zealand dominance over visitors from overseas, but by 1914 guideless activity was beginning to be a significant aspect of local climbing. In that year the group in Dunedin was ready to create a new community of climbers, away from the mountains and separate from the guides. They were already offering some alternative tuition in mountain skills

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<sup>54</sup> Kain p363; NZAJ 1975 p118-121; D Harrowfield interview with Andy Anderson 1984 CMA p60. Though a Canadian citizen, Kain's Austrian origins may also have disadvantaged him in war time,

<sup>55</sup> The process of the revival of the NZAC in 1914 was complex. Historian and climber David Herron made a detailed study of it - NZAJ 1958 p420-8

and they sought to create a formal body to sustain and develop their recreation. A mountain club or clubs offered new possibilities for developing climbing and redefining both it and its participants in more specifically New Zealand ways.

The existing guided climbing system faced a number of challenges from the creation of a mountaineering club for such an organisation was sufficiently different to be an alternative means of climbing. Instead of a recreation based in the mountains, especially at the Hermitage, a new urban climbing community would be created which could more readily be influenced by the attitudes and expectations of society. Most climbers lived in towns and cities and the proposal was to link them together. Allegiances to an organised group, and to fellow members of it, were likely to take priority over partnerships established with guides. An urban association would provide companionship out of the mountains, but also in them, and thus lessen the need for guides. It also suggested a different way of introducing novices to mountain climbing, which would reduce the need for instruction from guides. The formation of a mountaineering club thus threatened to lead to a broadening of the recreation and a considerable re-definition of both climbing and climbers.

The attempt to re-form the NZAC in 1914 was a struggle between a number of competing forces. New Zealand initiatives of a regional nature played an important part in moves towards a new formalisation of climbing. There had been no thought of a club when high climbing was re-established between 1903 and 1907, but from 1910 mountain climbing was also a recreation for middle-class New Zealanders who provided a basis for membership. Local steps to organise climbers and their recreation were both stimulated and reinforced by Otto Frind, from Canada, who had a wider experience of climbing. Attitudes rooted in the NZAC of the 1890s also had a major role to play in 1914. This precedent had been a national organisation, but it was modelled on the English Alpine Club and its members had seen the climbing world in imperialistic

terms. For those, such as AP Harper, who saw New Zealand climbing as part of a world-wide British recreation, the example of the institution in the 'Mother Country' was still impossible to ignore.

Local interest in a new alpine club in New Zealand first appeared in a 1910 newspaper editorial.<sup>56</sup> The writer was aware of the exploratory climbing then beginning and that the government was helping to make climbing more possible. Readers were reminded that there had been a New Zealand Alpine Club and told that it was "hardly credible that a country like ours, with its magnificent Alpine scenery, should have no association whose special business it is to foster the spirit of daring and adventure necessary for the sport of climbing." The issues of whether most New Zealanders wished to be daring and adventurous or could afford to go climbing were not examined. The editorial was not clear about the nature or purpose of the proposed club, hoping that it would train "aspiring young climbers", but suggesting it could bring together everyone with both recreational interest and work in the mountains. As had been the case in 1882, the belief was that a national organisation could be formed even though there were few active New Zealand climbers to belong to it.<sup>57</sup> Four years later the climbing scene was quite different and the number of climbers in Dunedin and Christchurch was sufficient to begin moves to create mountaineering clubs. The group in Dunedin thought in local terms because of the companionship they had already established. Frank Wright and his fellows in 1914 wished to build on their informal organisation of climbing and, through giving definite shape to it, create opportunities for greater local enthusiasm and participation. They intended to have an open membership so that novices could be included and trained for climbing. This was to be the basic pattern of the mountaineering development in the 1920s and 1930s which indicates that theirs was a practical approach.

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<sup>56</sup> *Press* 19 March 1910 p8 second editorial

<sup>57</sup> Only about a dozen New Zealanders spread from Hawkes Bay to Dunedin were actively climbing in 1910, nearly half of them guides and most of the others beginners.

It was the efforts and persuasiveness of the outsider, Otto Frind, which led to concrete action on the part of the Dunedin climbers. He belonged to the Canadian Alpine Club which had been formed in 1906 and his great climbing in New Zealand from January to March 1914 gave him an awareness of the local climbing scene and some status in it. It was his strong opinion that New Zealand needed to bring climbers together in order to structure the recreation and improve its facilities. Frind had no firm views on the type or form of club which would be best. He supported localism in Dunedin but he also considered that organisation of climbing would foster nationalism and, through links with similar groups elsewhere, a sense of imperialism. The importance of the English model could not be denied, but, like climbers in Dunedin and Christchurch, Frind wanted open membership similar to the Canadian AC. He accepted the use of guides for New Zealand as for Canadian climbers, but he considered they did not offer a sufficient basis for the future organisation of the recreation. Implicit in his views was the idea that the initiative for climbing should rest with the climbers, who were generally well-off, educated and middle-class, not with the lower class guides, the labourers in the recreation.<sup>58</sup>

At the point when the actions of Frind and the Dunedin climbers were beginning to bear local fruit, AP Harper intruded national and imperialistic considerations into the process. Whether he was piqued at the possibility of a replacement of 'his' original creation of 1891 or not is unclear, but it seems likely. He may also have been resentful at the influence of an outsider. Trained in law, Harper could be very convincing and once he became aware of what was happening in Dunedin, he worked swiftly. His capture of the impetus towards formalisation directed it to a revival of the national New Zealand

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<sup>58</sup> *Press* 16 April 1914 p5; *OW* 22 April 1914 p80; *NZ Herald* 25 April 1914 p8; Unknown newspaper April 1914 WAK p42; *NZAJ* 1958 p420. Frind was so keen on a New Zealand mountaineering club that even after he left the country he continued to encourage collective effort through correspondence.

Alpine Club, rather than any new or local bodies.<sup>59</sup> It was not unreasonable to seek to create a national organisation, but Harper still wanted it to be nearly in the image of the English AC. Both the process of 1914, and the rather exclusive club which resulted, excluded a number of climbers or would-be climbers, which created considerable ill-feeling towards both Harper and 'his' club. It was not an indigenous creation and it did not seem suited to New Zealand society.

The rules of membership were the key to the shape and style of the revived NZAC. Harper sought to define both climbers and climbing more narrowly than was wanted by most participants and in two ways membership was restricted to the point of inhibiting the development of climbing. Firstly, no provision was made for introducing novices to safe mountaineering. Harper did not see it as a function of the club to instruct members or would-be members in climbing skills, though this was what the editorial of 1910, Frind, and most climbers wanted. The NZAC's rules adhered to the English qualification model.<sup>60</sup> Rule 41 covered subscriber membership but left it uncertain whether they were to be active or passive members,<sup>61</sup> and only in the new circumstances after the war did Harper refer to subscribers as apprentice members.<sup>62</sup> Other rules made it clear that experience of climbing had to be gained before membership could be considered,<sup>63</sup> and the implication was that those interested should employ guides to help them gain the necessary experience. The growth of guideless climbing was virtually ignored though it

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<sup>59</sup> Harper wrote several incomplete and/or inaccurate versions of what happened but the whole story was not revealed till Herron's research and article in 1958. Harper & Frind PP NZAC Arch; NZAJ 1921 p7, 1941 p47-8, 1958 p420-8

<sup>60</sup> The qualification criteria were applied inconsistently in 1914-5, which alienated some climbers. Some new members in 1914 were virtual novices, but others in Christchurch who had begun climbing, and supported open membership, were ignored by the club's new officers.

<sup>61</sup> *Rules of the New Zealand Alpine Club* Dunedin 1914 p11

<sup>62</sup> NZAJ 1921 p8

<sup>63</sup> Rules 29 to 35 of the revived club concerned the election of members, to be based on a list of mountain expeditions and existing members' personal knowledge of the applicant - *Rules* 1914 p8-10

was a means of introducing beginners to the recreation. Harper always insisted he wanted to encourage climbing, but in 1914 he played a major role in excluding potential recruits from formal membership of the recreation.

The second limitation on membership was the specific exclusion of the paid mountaineering labourers, the guides. The very first rule made it clear that the NZAC was not for everyone: "The Club...shall only be open to amateurs."<sup>64</sup> The most prominent and skilled local climbers were not to be included because they were 'professional'. Their climbing was not a leisure pursuit by English definitions and so the experience of the guides was not to contribute to the recreational organisation. The NZAC was to be elitist, and there is no doubt this was Harper's doing for amateurism had strong class connotations which he supported, in spite of his earlier advocacy of pioneering manhood.<sup>65</sup> Only 'gentlemen' of means could afford to take part in an expensive recreation or sport for the love of it, which supposedly gave them purer motives. This was a false concept, but the distinction between those who could afford to go climbing, and those who could only climb by being paid to take others up mountains, was scrupulously maintained. Participation was refused to all those not of a certain class, designated by birth, income and occupation.

Thus two formalisations of climbing, club and guides, were to exist side by side, but both largely ignored the local trend between 1910 and 1914 towards independence from guides. Neither was the new climbing organisation to be a means of asserting colonial independence from imperial tutelage in climbing. The NZAC's differentiation between 'amateur' and 'professional' climbers supported the existence of a guided climbing system, at a time when New Zealand mountaineering was evolving in a different direction towards guideless climbing. Frind, Wright and others in 1914 were not looking to completely supplant the guides, but they did wish to provide an alternative

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<sup>64</sup> Rules 1914 p3

<sup>65</sup> NZAJ 1892 p41-2, 1893 p134-41; Harper *Pioneer Work* Preface, p15-6, 34-5, 324-8

structure for climbing where there was more freedom of choice. If the club had been all-inclusive, the distinction between guides and climbers would have become more blurred, supporting what was beginning to happen through exploratory and more independent climbing.

In spite of its many restrictions, the re-formed NZAC accepted women members, as it had done in the 1890s, which meant it was not as exclusive as the English Alpine Club. In terms of membership, gender was not apparently an issue in 1914 for there was no discussion or argument about the matter at all.<sup>66</sup> No doubt the previous inclusion of women and the prominence of people like Freda Du Faur were important in this. However, this acceptance of women in the NZAC did not reflect their comparatively limited place in climbing. Women were climbing only with men, usually guides, and this strongly supported male domination of the recreation. No women took part in independent exploratory climbing so the existence of women climbers confirmed the primacy of not just of men but of the guide system. The place of women seemed assured through possible membership of the club and their activity from 1909 to the end of the First World War, but all those involved in re-creating the club were men, no women were elected in 1914-15, and there is no indication that they were thought of as potential members.<sup>67</sup>

The difficulties of determining who might be a climber, and who the club was for, made it unlikely that the NZAC would be successful in 1914. It also had no natural centre and no regional sections to generate local enthusiasm.<sup>68</sup> There was no need to belong to the NZAC, to either learn to climb or to keep practising the recreation, because both could be done outside the club or through guides. The trend in climbing was towards a more nationalistic view

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<sup>66</sup> "The Revival of the NZAC 1914-15" NZAC Arch; NZAJ 1958 p420-27

<sup>67</sup> The most likely candidates were overseas: Freda Du Faur, Annie Lindon, Ada Julius. Possible members in New Zealand were: Beatrice Holdsworth, Irene Chambers, Barbara Dennistoun, Miss K Gerard, Muriel Graham.

<sup>68</sup> Rule 40 allowed for sections or branches of the club (*Rules* p11) but no efforts were made towards forming any section.



of the recreation, but Harper's influence re-imposed an imperial model. There was another immediate factor which led to the failure of the revived club - the outbreak of the First World War. Harper later wrote: "The Club was ready for action, but the Great War spragged our efforts",<sup>69</sup> but it is unclear what the action was to be. The purpose and activity proposed for the club were vague. Meetings were to be held, the *New Zealand Alpine Journal* was to be published, and there was a desire to build a new hut as memorial to Sydney King and his guides.<sup>70</sup> However, the Club was not set up for instruction which would have attracted new members, or for the organisation of climbing trips to bond them together through common activity. Whatever the club action might have been, the combination of its structure and rules with the outbreak of war meant it could not and did not function. Some climbers who might have been prominent in the club went overseas with New Zealand forces; others became involved in the local war effort. There were enough New Zealanders climbing during the war, including guides and women, to have constituted a club, but there was no way of sustaining a gentlemen's club such as Harper sought to re-create.

## THE IMPACT OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

War made the revival of the NZAC very difficult and it had other important effects on climbing. The move towards independent climbing, in the form of guideless exploratory mountaineering, was much reduced. Climbing was concentrated once again on the guide system at the Hermitage and Waiho Gorge. Most guides were employees of the Tourist Department as during the war the government chose to allow internal tourism to the Hermitage to continue. Within these limits of scope and type, climbing became more popular and obviously recreational in purpose. In spite of war there was an increased number of climbers and a greater demand for guides. The war restricted the

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<sup>69</sup> NZAJ 1941 p48

<sup>70</sup> Letter Wright to Harper 22 September 1914, Harper PP NZAC Arch; NZAJ 1941 p48

visits of overseas climbers and for the first time since 1894 climbing was dominated by New Zealanders, climbers as well as guides. The gender balance seemed to be altered because the proportion of climbers who were women was greatly increased, but male dominance was ensured by the leadership of guides.

Mountain climbing was different from many sports which had to significantly limit their activity because of the commitment to war service. The outbreak of war saw a wave of patriotic and imperial enthusiasm throughout much of New Zealand. From the beginning there was pressure in team sports to encourage the enlistment of members of suitable age, in their twenties or thirties.<sup>71</sup> Fiona Hall has found that the fitness and discipline believed to be developed by team sports, made sportsmen ideal soldiers.<sup>72</sup> The male camaraderie developed by sport also created peer pressure to enlist. Before the war loyalty to King and Empire, common in society, had been specifically associated with sport as well as militarism. Both before and during the war there was a military, imperial and racial context which saw sport and recreational activities as contributing to the fitness of the 'British' males for a militaristic and imperialistic future.<sup>73</sup> Climbers had a more individualistic pursuit but they were not immune to nationalistic and imperialistic feelings in society. The expression of New Zealand nationalism in the form of anti-German sentiment resulted in an attack on one climber with a Germanic name<sup>74</sup> and a campaign to rename all mountains with "enemy names".<sup>75</sup> There was pressure in society to serve in the

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<sup>71</sup> J Phillips *A Man's Country?* Auckland 1987 p159-62; F Hall "The Greater Game" MA History thesis CU 1989 p17-8,26-7,43-4

<sup>72</sup> Hall p14-27

<sup>73</sup> Phillips *A Man's Country?* p134-63; Hall p14-27

<sup>74</sup> *Press* 20 December 1938; *NZAJ* 1939 p114; Bob McKerrow "Ebenezer Teichelmann" unpublished MS Hokitika 1993 p1, citing R Field *Place of Return Hokitika Borough Council 1869-1989* p80

<sup>75</sup> "The Waiau and the Fox Where Teuton Names Should be Discarded (By Jas Cowan) (Written for the "Star")" unknown newspaper 22 September 1917, WAK p61; "German-Named Scenery (special to the "Star")" unknown newspaper 30 August 1918, WAK p65. British Cabinet Minister L S Amery was concerned about the

armed forces, but since there was no central body such as an alpine club to influence group attitude, the specific influences of mateship and group peer pressure, found in more tightly organised sports, do not seem to have occurred in mountain climbing. Climbing also did not translate to a war situation as easily as team sports with human opponents because the primary 'opposition' in climbing was the natural world.

A high proportion of guides and climbers joined the armed forces, or attempted to, before conscription, so clearly general influences in society were sufficient to persuade them to enlist. At least eighteen guides and climbers served overseas and others were active in the war effort at home. Eight died in the war and one other had his guiding career and life cut short by the gassing he received during the war.<sup>76</sup> While the numbers are tiny compared with total New Zealand figures,<sup>77</sup> climbing was such a small scale activity that the withdrawal of this number of active participants reduced the scope of the recreation during the war, and was to affect its redevelopment afterwards. Although they took an active part in the war, there is no indication that mountain guides were specially recruited for any fitness or skills that their occupation may have given them, and indeed these seem to have been ignored.<sup>78</sup> Some very fit and capable guides never served, and the war effort may have been the loser. Alec Graham's courage and endurance as a stretcher bearer in France stood out.<sup>79</sup> Client climbers were usually older than guides and less likely to be conscripted, but most volunteered for service, though many were in their forties and Dr Teichelmann over fifty.

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"aggressively Prussian" "blood and iron" names of the Franz Josef in late 1927 - *In the Rain and the Sun* London 1946 p153

<sup>76</sup> See Appendix B p304-5

<sup>77</sup> Phillips *A Man's Country?* p159,163: 124,211 served, about 100,000 overseas.

<sup>78</sup> Peter Graham was turned down because of flat feet - PC Dorothy Fletcher 24 January 1993. George Bannister "walked from Bruce Bay to Hokitika to enlist...only to be told by the Doctor that he had flat feet and would never be able to do long route marches." Then he walked the 250 miles (400km) back home - *NZAJ* 1991 p167 citing Jack Bannister, a nephew; P Madgwick *Aotea* Hokitika 1992 p91

<sup>79</sup> He was awarded the Military Medal - Graham & Wilson p143-4

From 1915 there were reservations, among the public and in many sports, about the validity of continuing recreations at home when many more soldiers were needed and the war had become less of an adventure and game. The problem for society was that pleasurable activities had to be frowned on in the midst of a life and death struggle for the British Empire, but recreations also had to be kept going to provide for society after the war. The public attitude towards holidays away from home was ambivalent<sup>80</sup> and people were aware of a paradox:

The necessities of war naturally restrict holiday-making travels, and...not many people will feel disposed to go very far from their homes for the midsummer spell from work. The needful change of scene and air...can, however, be secured...with a very small expenditure of money and within a comparatively short distance of their homes...there are Alpine districts of grandeur and beauty hardly inferior to the Aorangi country, much nearer Christchurch and, in this motoring age, quite easy of access.<sup>81</sup>

The mountains could still be visited by those who were reasonably well-off and there seems to have been no pressure on climbing to 'close down' for the war. Commitment to the war effort curtailed exploratory climbing in the more remote parts of the South Island, but at the Hermitage it was business much as usual throughout the war. There were no restrictions on transport which might have affected visits to tourist resorts or mountain areas, tourism continued to be encouraged, and the numbers visiting the Hermitage kept rising till the influenza epidemic of late 1918.<sup>82</sup>

The continuation of tourism meant guides and facilities were still available so that climbing could continue.<sup>83</sup> In spite of the war and the lack of profit from the Hermitage, maintenance of tracks, bridges and huts continued, with some new construction.<sup>84</sup> There was a marked increase in client climbers at the

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<sup>80</sup> Hall p10,34-46

<sup>81</sup> "Among the Alps" unknown newspaper 11 November 1916 WAK p52

<sup>82</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1913-20

<sup>83</sup> The number of climbing guides was 3 in 1914-15 at the height of enthusiasm for voluntary enlistment, but 5 or 7 in other war years - *AJHR* H-2 1915-18

<sup>84</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1916 p4

Hermitage, from 19 in 1913-14 to 37 in 1917-18, and the gender balance became more equal.<sup>85</sup> Others climbed from Waiho Gorge with Alec Graham until he went into the army.<sup>86</sup> Most of the climbers were New Zealanders and apart from the presence in 1914-6 of guide Conrad Kain, New Zealand climbing was isolated from the rest of the climbing world. Most experienced climbers were actively involved in the war effort, so newcomers were forced to depend on guides.<sup>87</sup> Inexperience and reliance on guides led to climbing during the war that was narrower in purpose than much that had occurred previously and there was little exploration of new routes, peaks and mountain country. Most climbers focused their recreation on reaching moderately difficult summits,<sup>88</sup> and guides and other facilities in the Mt Cook region increased the chances of such achievement. Enterprising middle-class women, perhaps less restricted in wartime, could still reach the Hermitage and the hotel at Waiho Gorge. Their sex and relative inexperience meant a reliance on guides, but thanks to them, a dozen women climbed regularly during the war.<sup>89</sup>

The First World War thus had considerable impact on mountain climbing in New Zealand. In particular it confirmed the dominance of guided climbing at specific tourist centres which had been established before the war. Even in wartime both the government and climbers continued to support this system. The war also reinforced the pre-eminence of the guided climbing pattern by

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<sup>85</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1914 p5-7, 1918 p5-6. Of the 37 client climbers in 1917-18, 17 were women and 20 were men.

<sup>86</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1917 p5; Graham & Wilson p140-43

<sup>87</sup> The guides themselves might be inexperienced. When Peter Graham climbed Mt Cook on 13 December 1915 with his wife Muriel, the first ascent by a New Zealand woman, they had with them four other guides whose limited climbing experience Graham wished to augment.

<sup>88</sup> Four female and three male climbers ascended Mt Cook during the war. Seven guides made that climb, most more than once, but otherwise there was little climbing of very high or difficult peaks.

<sup>89</sup> Irene Chambers, Muriel Graham, Beatrice Holdsworth, Eleanor Joachim, Pamela Marsden, L Bing, Kathleen Holl, A Humphries, Margaret Lorimer, Marie Sloman (Sydney), Dorothy Theomin, Jane Thomson. The number of women rose from 6 in 1914 to 17 in 1918 while there were between 16 and 20 men, so the proportion of women as guided climbers rose from 32% to 46% - *AJHR* H-2 1914-18

limiting independent climbing in more remote mountain areas and preventing the possibility of an alternative club structure for the recreation. There seemed no reason why, after the war, the guides should not continue their pre-war progress and remain central to the growth of climbing. However, some independent climbing continued throughout the war and it was such activity which was eventually to be the foundation for new developments in the 1920s and 1930s. Guided climbing was confirmed by the war but this was to be merely an interruption to other processes. The growth of guideless exploratory mountaineering prior to the war, and even the failure to re-create an English-style mountain club, suggested the likelihood in the future of a more specifically New Zealand type and organisation of climbing. This would be based on small groups of independent mountaineers throughout the country, far from the guided climbing which had been so successful in re-establishing the recreation between 1900 and 1920.



## CHAPTER SIX

### TOWARDS MOUNTAIN INDEPENDENCE 1920-1940

An expansion of guideless climbing and the development of more indigenous ways of mountaineering typified the considerable progress that New Zealand mountaineers made towards greater independence in the years between the two world wars. This chapter is concerned with why and how this change occurred. Social and economic developments made significant contributions in practical and motivational ways. Guides became less important because of growing do-it-yourself attitudes and an alteration to the role of the state in the mountains. Tramping became the most popular mountain recreation and both it and the formal urban groups which were created by the new variety of mountaineers supported the increased independence in climbing. These clubs linked the 'civilised' and natural worlds more closely and provided internal standards and controls for mountaineering, but the freedom implicit in such activity still created some anxieties in the wider society. The following section, Chapter Seven, will examine the expansion of participation and location, and the influence of the few connections there were with overseas climbing. It will also consider further aspects and attitudes of this guideless mountaineering which made it a local creation and brought it closer to existing images of male identity and nationalism.



## SOCIETY AND THE MOUNTAINS

Growth in urbanisation from 1920 to 1940<sup>1</sup> encouraged a greater desire for recreation and healthy outdoor activity. There was renewed interest in the relatively unchanged natural world, which by this time in New Zealand was to be found primarily at the beach<sup>2</sup> or in the bush and mountains. All these offered an increasing contrast to towns and cities which seemed to be ever more structured and unnatural. Some people looked to the hill and mountain region as a setting for holidays and leisure time pursuits. Camping, tramping, climbing and skiing were a distinct change from everyday life and work because their activity and setting were as far removed as was practicable from what seemed a regulated urban world. Such a change, no matter how energetic or challenging, provided refreshment and restoration. James Cowan, a writer and sometime publicist for the Tourist Department,<sup>3</sup> attributed some of the value placed on features of the natural environment to its noticeable destruction in New Zealand, and he also considered that improved transport had led to greater appreciation of the natural world. However, for him, as for others, the principal value of the natural world lay in the contrast to be found between it and "the artificial life of cities and towns". The difference was fundamental to an "increase of intimacy with nature" which brought human recreation.<sup>4</sup>

Mountaineering developed a strong urban base in the interwar period which made it more respectable, though it never had the support or status of other leisure pursuits. Growing recreation in urban society was centred on team or individual competitive sports, often involving mass spectating. In contrast

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<sup>1</sup> *Oxford History* p254; *New Zealand Official 1990 Yearbook* p133-4

<sup>2</sup> 'The beach' was the most popular natural environment for recreation in the inter-war period. In contrast to mountaineers, surf life-guards were very visible, altruistic, and clearly masculine.

<sup>3</sup> A H McLintock ed. *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* Wellington 1966 Vol I p404

<sup>4</sup> Cowan *Tongariro* p9

tramping and climbing, which together made up mountaineering, had a remote setting and they were not overtly competitive. However, groups focused on these activities were formed increasingly in the 'civilised' world, not in the mountains. Family members and friends from school, work, or university could all combine for mountain adventure.<sup>5</sup> They might learn about the world of valleys and mountain ranges as a team of equals, or rely initially on one more experienced leader. Small groups of mountaineering friends always existed, often within the formalisation of mountain clubs. It was in this social and urban context that a significant proportion of the process of mountaineering took place, especially the preparation for trips and review of them afterwards.

Continued improvements in transport promoted the development of outdoor recreation in practical ways. Travel became cheaper, easier, and wide-ranging, helping to extend the 'civilised' world further into the natural world.

Mountaineers were primarily assisted by improvements in roading and the availability of many more motor vehicles - buses, trucks and private motor cars - which gave increased flexibility and choice of destination. As clubs were formed, the hiring of buses or trucks for group transport helped reduce the cost of reaching the mountains. Once there, horses were often used by parties for river crossings and for packing in food, equipment and hut building materials. In the 1930s aircraft began to show their potential for assistance to mountaineers.<sup>6</sup> Railway travel became very important for two developing climbing areas in the 1920s. The North Island Main Trunk line encouraged the use of Tongariro National Park for a variety of alpine sports, and rail transport made Arthur's Pass a similar centre. Trains across the South Island after the

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<sup>5</sup> Many early CMC members had been at Christ College - C E Fenwick "A Brief History of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club" 1982 CMA; Harrowfield interview with Andy Anderson 1984 CMA p9. Independent climber Greta Stevenson was introduced to the mountains by her botany lecturer J E Holloway whose family became friends - PC Una Holloway July, August 1993; PC Marion Borrie 17 September, 4 October 1993. Jim and Scott Gilkison, later prominent mountaineers, were introduced to the mountains at an early age by their father - W S Gilkison *Peaks, Packs and Mountain Tracks* Christchurch 1940 p13-8; NZAJ 1977 p146; PC Jim Gilkison 26 September 1993, 19 January 1994

<sup>6</sup> NZAJ 1935 p57-65; Gilkison *Peaks, Packs* p96-101

Otira tunnel was opened in 1923 allowed fleeting but fairly inexpensive weekend visits which could maintain fitness and steadily improve mountain skills.<sup>7</sup> The exodus of construction workers from Arthur's Pass also gave recreationalists the opportunity to purchase houses there cheaply.<sup>8</sup> While the mountains of the central North Island and Arthur's Pass were lower than in the Mt Cook region, they offered a range of difficulty and provided great scope for learning to tramp, ski or climb.

The movement of members of urban society out into the natural world resulted in greater public awareness of the mountain regions and encouraged further discovery. Beautiful scenery continued to be emphasised in both written and visual information about the mountains, but recreation in that setting also featured in an increasing variety of publications.<sup>9</sup> Newspapers frequently gave space to new climbs and exploration and to reports on club affairs, especially if participants supplied the copy, but they also gave accidents greater prominence than accomplishment.<sup>10</sup> A few guide books to mountain areas were produced, which made access and activity easier.<sup>11</sup> Club publications became more common, to give guidance and to record the minutiae of trips and organisation.<sup>12</sup> Further publicising of local mountaineering came in books at the

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<sup>7</sup> R Odell p16; *Christchurch Star* 9 April 1932 BWI

<sup>8</sup> Adams *Jack's Hut* p80-4. The Christchurch mountaineer Will Kennedy had had a cottage at Arthur's Pass from before the First World War, and he took parties there to introduce them to the mountains - CM 1951 p127; NZAJ 1951 p119; Adams p137

<sup>9</sup> *The NZ School Journal* Part III Vol XIII No 6&8, Vol XIV No 2&3 - Tom Fletcher editor; B Baughan *Glimpses of New Zealand Scenery* 1922, *Arthur's Pass and the Otira Gorge* 1925; *The New Zealand Railways Magazine* 1925+; *Wanderlust* January-September 1930; *The Australian and New Zealand Ski Year Book* 1931+; I E Dickens *Out of the Mountains* Dunedin 1938; Illustrated weekly newspapers

<sup>10</sup> *The Press* (Christchurch) 31 August - 8 September 1931 had extensive coverage of the accident to a party of students on Mt Ruapehu 30 August 1931.

<sup>11</sup> G Moir *Guide Book to the...Great Southern Lakes* Dunedin 1925; J Cowan *Tongariro National Park* Wellington 1927; R S Odell *Handbook of the Arthur Park National Park* Christchurch 1935

<sup>12</sup> *New Zealand Alpine Journal* 1921-, *Tararua Trampler* 1928-, *Alpinesport* 1930- (S Forbes & I McNab *Alpine Sports* Auckland 1986 p12-3), *Canterbury Mountaineer* 1932-. Occasional publications: G E Mabin ed. for Hutt Valley Tramping Club *In Search of New Zealand* 1934, *Hills and Valleys* 1936; *Safety in the Mountains* 1937 (FMC)

end of the inter-war period,<sup>13</sup> and in the outlining of Pakeha achievement for the centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1940.<sup>14</sup> By that date there was a considerable body of literature supporting mountain recreation.

Increased confidence on the part of New Zealanders also had a part to play in creating the new interest in mountain recreation. This self-belief stemmed partly from the First World War experience, and from success in sport, especially rugby. War and sport, and the successful transition from a pioneering to a 'civilised' society, created national pride. This developed attitudes which encouraged physical pastimes, independence, response to challenge, and a willingness to explore and attempt a wider range of activities. Before the war climbing had been dominated by visitors from overseas, but few who came after the war had much impact and nearly all depended on guides. In contrast local climbers developed the assurance to rely on their own efforts and 'conquer' their own mountains. With greatly increased knowledge and experience, an attitude developed among many young climbers that the mountain world was their oyster for profit and delight. They had confidence in their ability to predict and cope with the weather, to make camp in any circumstances, to cover difficult country with a minimum of problems, and to enjoy it all.<sup>15</sup> By the early 1930s climbers could visualise and attempt more difficult new routes and the assumption was being made that any summit could be reached.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> John Pascoe *Unclimbed New Zealand* London 1939, Scott Gilkison *Peaks, Packs and Mountain Tracks* Christchurch 1940

<sup>14</sup> J Pascoe "The Mountains" *Making New Zealand* Vol.I No10 Wellington 1939; *Auckland Star* Centennial Number 31 October 1939 p19; *Press* Centennial Supplement 16 March 1940 p39; W G McClymont *The Exploration of New Zealand* Wellington 1940

<sup>15</sup> The confidence is best shown in *CM* 1932-39 & Pascoe *Unclimbed New Zealand* passim.

<sup>16</sup> Some ascents took time; see the saga of Mt Evans, Pascoe *Unclimbed* p96-115. The Syme Ridge of Mt Tasman was first considered January 1927 and climbed by Rod Syme & Dan Bryant 29 January 1931 - Rod Syme Diary, *NZAJ* 1931 p176-82. The East Ridge of Mt Cook was first considered in January 1931, attempted in January 1933 by Lud Mahan & Dan Bryant, climbed by them 15 January 1938 - *NZAJ* 1938 p255-60. No guides were involved in any of these.

There was much to support mountaineering in the wider, especially urban, society, but the process of adjustment to new structures and practices showed a division between conservative forces and the possibilities of greater opportunity. The move towards mountaineering by a greater variety of people typified a new independence, but there was a strand in New Zealand society wary of too much freedom, especially for young men and women. Mountain recreation was to be encouraged because it was healthy and developed 'manly' qualities, but it was also dangerous, uncontrolled, and not respectable.<sup>17</sup> The mapping of valleys and ranges by mountaineers was part of the incorporation of the natural world within urban society, but the fact that it was done for recreation rather than settlement reduced even the validity of this 'work'. The ambivalence in society towards mountaineering continued to be visible in attitudes towards the recreation and its participants.

Increased numbers in the mountains brought more accidents and deaths which reminded the public of the risks involved. The chances of injury in a sport like rugby were probably greater than in mountaineering, but accidents in the mountains were more spectacular, at least in people's imaginations, and more likely to lead to death. Many casualties did not result from climbing itself, but the public tended to group together all those who went into the hills and valleys. Mountaineers felt increasingly secure in their own recreation and they made efforts to defuse criticism and justify their leisure pursuit. They did this primarily by stressing the achievements of tramping and climbing, but occasionally a more direct approach was taken. In a newspaper article, lawyer George Lockwood, a skier and climber, disagreed with the commonly held proposition "That Mountaineering Is Exceptionally Dangerous, Arduous And Useless".<sup>18</sup> He argued that exploration had a useful purpose, the hard physical

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<sup>17</sup> Andy Anderson, later one of New Zealand's foremost climbers, was warned off the mountains in the 1920s by his family, because of the danger to be found there - Harrowfield interview with Andy Anderson 1984 CMA p1,33

<sup>18</sup> No 33 in a series on "Fallacies" *Press* 4 April 1931 p14. Another article, by Andy Anderson, was headlined "Mountaineering Not Just Another Form of Suicide" though only a small part of it addressed the issue of safety - *Christchurch Star* 16 April 1932 BWI

work of mountaineering was healthy, and the danger could be minimised. However, it was difficult for mountaineers to explain satisfactorily to non-participants the intangibles, such as the spice of danger. It was always frustrating for mountaineers to be asked to justify their choice of recreation when other activities, including all the principal urban sports, were accepted as valid without question.

Mountaineering also raised issues of masculinity and femininity. Tramping and climbing could be 'manly' activities, but they were not seen as 'womanly'. The wider society did much to discourage women from such activities, but even men might be pressured by the responsibilities of marriage or a job to curtail or cease their mountain recreation. For men a narrow but clear distinction was drawn between being tough and being rash, and the dangers of climbing seemed to fit the latter. Yet the courage, fitness and other qualities shown in climbing were to be encouraged. There was a fine line between controlling 'the bloke's' larrikinism, drinking and anti-social behaviour,<sup>19</sup> and restricting his freedom and ability to show his initiative, determination and toughness. These were the very attributes which had made for successful pioneering in the nineteenth century, and which had given New Zealand men prominence in sport and war. It was only in the 1930s that the qualities displayed in exploratory mountaineering began to identify it with the prevailing male physical culture.<sup>20</sup>

There was greater pressure on women to take no part in mountain recreation and the expectation that women should devote themselves to domesticity had powerful advocates. From 1907 Dr F Truby King and the Plunket Society stressed the importance of more and healthier babies and children for the benefit of race, nation and empire and emphasised that women should be

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<sup>19</sup> 6 o'clock pub closing was introduced in 1918 to make sure men got home to their wives and families.

<sup>20</sup> J Phillips *A Man's Country?* Auckland 1987 p39-40,47-80,86-7,96-7,100,102-3,122 offers more extensive discussion of these issues. See also Chapter Seven below.

wives and mothers above all else. These attitudes and pressures combined with the desire to rebuild society after the First World War to maintain limits on the roles of most women. On marriage they were to give up paid work and other activity of their own, to concentrate on the home. Though there might be fewer children per family, their period of dependence on parents tended to increase, and standards of childcare were raised. So the length of time women were involved in rearing children was not reduced.<sup>21</sup> Education, both at home and school, confirmed that males, not females, were to be physically active and to seek challenges in recreation. Imposition of "a scientific justification for confining women to the home" was also more easily possible in an organised fashion in towns. The wife-mother was now, even more clearly, to be the primary care-giver in the family, firmly located in the home.<sup>22</sup>

Since both climbing and tramping, like most sports, needed regular participation and practice for competence and enjoyment to be maintained, most women, on marriage, became effectively excluded from such recreation. Increased emphasis was placed on the need for women to be healthy, but any physical exercise had to be compatible with being a wife and mother. Independence, strenuous physical recreation and danger in rough remote settings were not for them, though this same ideology could allow men to continue to escape from home and family for recreation. There were still the obstacles of dress, chaperonage and stereotypes of women to overcome, and there could be no great number of women climbing while economic power remained with men. Only two types of women were able to take up climbing for any length of time. In the 1930s a number of young women, often students, became mountaineers with the assistance of clubs. Other women continued to go climbing with guides throughout the interwar period. Both were to some

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<sup>21</sup> B Brookes C Macdonald & M Tennant *Women in History* Wellington 1986 introduction & p87-117; R Fry *It's Different for Daughters* Wellington 1985 passim

<sup>22</sup> E Olssen "Women, Work and Family: 1880-1926" in P Bunkle & B Hughes eds *Women in New Zealand Society* Auckland 1980 p167-81; *Oxford History* p259

extent free from society's pressures, the former on account of their youth, the latter usually because they were unmarried, middle-aged, without family responsibilities, and economically independent.

Guides, who had been so dominant before 1920, continued their work, but they were used on a smaller proportion of all ascents as mountain activity independent of them became the new norm. They were increasingly seen as a conservative and old-fashioned means of climbing, unsuited to adventure-loving young New Zealanders and belonging to another world. However, guides remained of some importance. Many people, in both the wider community and in mountaineering, saw guides as maintainers of the standards of climbing. They were highly regarded by the general public because they offered safety at a time when mountaineering appeared to have too much risk.<sup>23</sup> As well, guides offered achievement to those who could afford to employ them. Some climbers, for the sake of their own independence, chose to ignore guides, but most recognised that they were an important repository of information and experience, about climbing in general, and the high peaks in particular. Even independent climbers could usefully take guides as exemplars and tutors for brief periods. There were far too few guides to introduce all novices to safe climbing, as a few older members of the NZAC wished,<sup>24</sup> but they did continue to lead many of the high climbs, for they had the knowledge and abilities which were the keys to successful ascents.

The withdrawal of the Reform government from direct involvement in the running of the Hermitage from 1922 significantly reduced the role of the state in climbing and altered the status of guides. Tourism had been the original reason for guides and often the means of creating climbers, but now tramping was becoming the activity which produced them. The government chose to

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<sup>23</sup> *Press* 20 February 1925 p9, 4 February 1926 p8

<sup>24</sup> Caution about guideless climbing was stated *NZAJ* 1933 p269 and implied as late as 1943 p1-6.



disengage from tourist ventures where there had been little profit,<sup>25</sup> and to leave them to private enterprise. The Hermitage was leased to the Mount Cook Company<sup>26</sup> under Rodolph Wigley, from 1 October 1922.<sup>27</sup> This led to a lesser position for guides as they became employees of a company instead of a relatively independent part of the government service. The Mount Cook Company was not concerned with the development of climbing, and conditions of employment for guides remained poor.<sup>28</sup> Mountain guiding was labour intensive and not very profitable so high climbing was not given the priority or prominence it had had before the war.<sup>29</sup> The Company chose to make its profit through the transport, accommodation and entertainment of a greater number of visitors year round. The recreational activity provided by the Company included glacier walks and skiing, both of which could be provided for 'the masses', unlike climbing. Peter Graham decided to leave the Hermitage after 19 years there, because of the changed attitudes and practices, and moved to join his brother Alec at Franz Josef. Private guiding was successful on the West Coast between the wars, but the Hermitage remained the principal mountain centre. The Mount Cook Company advertised that climbing guides were available, but few were experienced in high guiding.<sup>30</sup> They were no longer so clearly superior in skill or experience to many other climbers and they seldom sought new and challenging climbs.

In time the Mount Cook Company began to assume monopolistic proprietary rights over not just the Hermitage, but the whole Mt Cook mountain region,

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<sup>25</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1914-1922 income & expenditure figures; Pearce p73

<sup>26</sup> At this time the Mount Cook Motor Company.

<sup>27</sup> *AJHR* 1923 H-2 p6

<sup>28</sup> PC Felix Harvey 25 February 1992 (Hermitage guide 1933-7)

<sup>29</sup> *Press* 5 & 6 February 1926 p11 & 16; *NZAJ* 1926 p350

<sup>30</sup> Frank Milne, Vic Williams & Mick Bowie were the most significant Hermitage guides in the 1920s and 1930s; *NZAJ* 1978 p116-8. One problem for the guides was that Wigley and his managers would sometimes lead novices to expect to be taken up Mt Cook, which put guides and clients at risk - *NZAJ* 1969 p258; *F Alack Guide Aspiring* Auckland c1962 p19

and this threatened to restrict high climbing and to hinder its development as independent adventure.<sup>31</sup> Guideless climbers who wished to camp were ordered out or otherwise intimidated by Hermitage managers. If they could not be forced to use guides, climbers were to use facilities on the Company's terms.<sup>32</sup> It was partly in response to this situation that free use of national parks was an aim of the Federated Mountain Clubs organisation from its inception in 1930-1.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, many of the efforts of the Mount Cook Company to bring more 'civilisation' into the mountain world were of direct assistance to climbers. They could take advantage of reduced fares and accommodation costs, and the fact that the Hermitage was open all year round.<sup>34</sup> Improvements to some facilities, such as mountain huts, also directly benefited climbers.<sup>35</sup> From the 1924-5 season Wigley employed student guides to pack to huts, guide on glaciers and do menial tasks round the hotel. This was "a system which...was to introduce a large number of keen youngsters to the mountains",<sup>36</sup> and most of them became independent climbers.

The trend was for an increasing proportion of mountaineers to pursue their recreation without guides, but there were guided climbers throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Some visitors to Franz Josef, Fox Glacier and the Hermitage were not otherwise capable of fulfilling their mountain ambitions. The hard work and leadership of guides enabled them to climb safely and enjoyably, but without such assistance their recreation would have been much curtailed, and

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<sup>31</sup> The Mount Cook Company secured a further lease of the Hermitage for 15 years from 1 October 1927 - Pearce p77. Mt Cook National Park was not created till 1953. The Company also built the Chateau on the slopes of Mt Ruapehu in 1929 to expand into another mountain region.

<sup>32</sup> Harper PP NZAC Arch; NZAJ 1933 p258, 1934 p451-4, 1935 p164, 1938 p293-5; R Burrell *Fifty Years of Mountain Federation* Wellington 1981 p145; PC A Anderson 11 January 1994

<sup>33</sup> See below p235

<sup>34</sup> Pearce p77-80,94; Wigley *Mount Cook* p59-85

<sup>35</sup> AJHR H-2 1924 p6, 1925 p7, 1930 p10, 1931 p12; *Press* 22 August 1925 p9; Wigley *Mount Cook* p24-34,47-54

<sup>36</sup> NZAJ 1969 p258; Wigley *Mount Cook* p39-40

perhaps not even attempted. Their expectation that guides would lead them up mountains increasingly distinguished them from guideless climbers.<sup>37</sup> Since the guided mode remained beyond the financial means of most people, it also tended to identify climbers whose level of affluence was well above average, though in other ways participants showed considerable variety. Those who were busy, older, ambitious, from overseas, less experienced, or unfit to carry heavy loads, all made use of guides to help them up high mountains in the Mt Cook region.<sup>38</sup> There the guides were also willing to assist younger independent climbers, those who on a first visit could find the different mountain scale and the varied snow and ice conditions more difficult than expected.<sup>39</sup>

Climbers with ambitions elsewhere also used guides. Occasionally the aim was known, such as Mt Aspiring, Mt Earnslaw or Mt Tutoko, three prominent 9000ft peaks in Otago and Fiordland.<sup>40</sup> Expeditions might be more comfortable and successful if there were guides to do the laborious work of finding routes up unfamiliar valleys, establishing camps, and leading on the peaks. Tom Fletcher, Will Kennedy and others on various trips to the Godley glacier 1916-24 found it easier if they employed a guide.<sup>41</sup> Archie Scott, having not quite achieved all he wanted in unguided parties up the Godley in 1931 and 1932, had a guide in 1933 to ensure greater success.<sup>42</sup> In remote ranges where there was more need for exploration, guides also took part in many of the first

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<sup>37</sup> There were always some who climbed in both ways.

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix C p306-7

<sup>39</sup> Canterbury Mountaineering Club members, usually extremely independent, employed guides in the Mt Cook region: *AJHR* 1930-36; *CM* 1932 p52, 1933 p104-5, 1934 p106, 1935 p75-7,143-4. An example of climbers having difficulties on a first visit: *CM* 1937 p56-8; *NZAJ* 1937 p109-10. Many independent climbers benefited from the freely given guide advice - Frank Simmons letter 8 July 1968 *NZAC Arch*; *CM* 1975 p16; *NZAJ* 1978 p118; Harrowfield p17; *PC* Jim Gilkison 19 January 1994

<sup>40</sup> *NZAJ* 1930 p77, 1934 p437, 1937 p113-4,117-8, 1940 p248, 1978 p111; Gilkison *Aspiring* p39

<sup>41</sup> *NZAJ* 1921 p31-7,81-5,91-99, 1922 p143-55, 1923 p203-19

<sup>42</sup> *NZAJ* 1932 p97-107, 1933 p160-70

ascents. In particular, a number of women climbers always relied on guides to take them to seldom visited valleys and peaks on the West Coast.<sup>43</sup> It was not just in the Mt Cook area that there was sufficient demand for guides to ensure their continued existence, in spite of the popularity of guideless climbing.

All climbers recognised that the Hermitage was the major climbing centre in New Zealand, in spite of developments elsewhere, and there was always concern about the costs there because they limited climbing. The editor of the revived *NZAJ*, Tom Fletcher, several times in 1921 expressed concern about the cost of staying at the Hermitage or nearby mountain huts, and the failure to cater for "climbers of smaller means". The Tourist Department was conscious of the high cost of reaching the Hermitage and staying there, but in 1921 the tariff at the Hermitage was raised to £1 5s a day.<sup>44</sup> This was well beyond the means of unskilled or skilled workers whose average weekly income in 1925 might be just over £4.<sup>45</sup> The leasing of the Hermitage in 1922 saw some reduction of costs, but a hotel in such a remote setting could never be a cheap place to run, and on the whole visitors to the Hermitage in the Wigley era remained reasonably wealthy, or they made only brief visits.<sup>46</sup> In 1924 it cost up to £15 for a week at the Hermitage or in mountain huts, using a guide to ascend one moderately difficult peak, and it was more for two guides to ascend Mt Cook, Tasman or Sefton.<sup>47</sup> The expense of employing guides had risen little by the early 1930s, but it was between £10 and £20 to climb one high peak. Even a moderate excursion over Copland Pass cost £10 15s in 1931.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *NZAJ* 1932 p82-92, 1935 p12-17,152-3,211, 1937 p50-8,73-77

<sup>44</sup> *NZAJ* 1921 p3,4,107; *AJHR* 1922 p5

<sup>45</sup> *New Zealand Official 1990 Yearbook* p378

<sup>46</sup> *NZAJ* 1922 p158-9,162, 1933 p258, 1934 p451-4, 1938 p293-5; AP Harper *An Alpine Paradise* 1924 p23 NZAC Arch; *Press* 6 February 1926 p16; Harper PP NZAC Arch; Pearce p77-94

<sup>47</sup> Harper *Alpine Paradise* p23

<sup>48</sup> Harper PP NZAC Arch

There was expense involved for all climbers, whether they employed guides or not. Guiding was beyond the means of most people but it became less and less obligatory in the interwar period, which helped reduce costs. The 'discovery' of mountain ranges closer to home also made cheaper climbing possible.

However, none of the larger towns and cities were very near to the mountains, and although there were more transport possibilities, they still had to be paid for. Equipment was increasingly available, but it was expensive. Certain items were essential for climbing, though tramping could be pursued more cheaply. The number who were prevented from climbing because they did not have sufficient income can never be known, but there must have been many who, because of economic restrictions, either could not begin mountaineering, or had their activity curtailed. At the same time, greater numbers of people than ever before did choose to use some of their disposable income on outdoor recreation.

The somewhat erratic progress of the New Zealand economy between the wars was important background to all climbers and climbing. Overall there was considerable economic development, punctuated by a recession 1920-21 and a long period of economic downturn from 1926 which became the Depression of the early 1930s. The recovering economy was then moderated by war. In general terms there were rising standards of living and greater affluence in the middle levels of society which made holidays away from home and out of the city more affordable and increasingly popular. The natural world became a focus of much more recreation, at the beach and in the hills, and the possibility of climbing came within the reach of more people. However, even if income was sufficient, time available for mountaineering was not always easy to find for any workers, middle- or lower-class. Till the introduction of the 40-hour week from 1936, only Saturday afternoons and Sundays might be available for mountain recreation, other than during an annual holiday or statutory long weekends.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> PC Russell Edwards & Jim Gilkison 19 January 1994; Mavis Davidson PC 11 October 1994 & *Evening Post* 27 April 1974; *Oxford History* p338

The Depression of the early 1930s had surprisingly little impact on climbing. Though most wages dropped substantially, so did some costs. There were still climbers who could afford guides, though some were unable to do so.<sup>50</sup> In spite of the Depression, 1930 actually marks the beginning of a major resurgence of independent climbing under the aegis of new mountain clubs. People were encouraged to climb independently because they could not afford guides, and perhaps lack of money meant participation in mountain recreation was valued as a contrast to the difficulties of ordinary life. Younger climbers often had such enthusiasm and willingness to make do that they were able to sustain their climbing on very little income. Some young men in jobs hardly noticed the Depression, so immersed were they in their mountain activity,<sup>51</sup> though they would have had to be careful of their spending. John Pascoe, a law clerk in 1930, later commented: "An Arthur's Pass excursion for the day was 5/- return; quite enough when your wage was only £1 a week."<sup>52</sup> In the early 1930s Russell Edwards, a shipping clerk in Dunedin, earned £1 10s, and Andy Anderson, a teacher, only £1 5s per week, but climbing was a large part of their lives.<sup>53</sup> The Depression probably had more impact on women than on men. Women were less likely to be economically independent, more likely to be concerned with helping others in difficult times, and they always had less social freedom than men.<sup>54</sup> Incomes rose as the Depression lifted and from 1936 government legislation determined minimum wages,<sup>55</sup> but even so many people had to save for months to afford longer Christmas trips. Mountaineer Mavis Davidson

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<sup>50</sup> Mona Wilson had to stop climbing in 1930 because her dentist husband's income was so much reduced and she could not pay for the guides she had always used - PC Mary Howorth (daughter) 20 January 1994. Essie Brown, a piano teacher in Christchurch, was unable to do any high climbing because she could not afford the guide and accommodation costs at the Hermitage 1932-33 - PC 13 January 1993

<sup>51</sup> PC Russell Edwards 19 January 1994: "Those of us who were young and single and in jobs didn't worry much about the Depression".

<sup>52</sup> CM 1975 p103

<sup>53</sup> PC Andy Anderson 11 January 1994; PC Russell Edwards 19 January 1994

<sup>54</sup> E Ebbett *Victoria's Daughters* Wellington 1981 shows this general background.

<sup>55</sup> *Oxford History* p338

earned an above-the-award wage as a shorthand-typist and book-keeper at £3 15s per week in the late 1930s, but much of this went on renting a room and living expenses.<sup>56</sup>

In spite of difficulties caused by the Depression and lack of income, independent mountaineering was more accessible because it was cheaper than guided climbing. Guideless climbers could spread some of the costs of equipment over a number of years, especially if, as many did, they began with tramping and only later moved on to climbing. However, in contrast to guided climbing, the equipment had to be provided by the independent climber him/herself and even before the Depression mountaineers were often inadequately equipped on early trips.<sup>57</sup> Items of gear were not cheap even though requirements soon became standardised and good quality increasingly available as importers, retailers and local manufacturers provided for an expanding recreation.<sup>58</sup> Since a considerable variety of mountain activity was possible with no more specialist equipment than boots, pack and ice axe, other desirable items could be acquired over time, or as circumstances changed for the better.<sup>59</sup> Possession of a rope or tent could be shared, and it was possible for climbers to make some of their own equipment.<sup>60</sup> As clubs became established they purchased a variety of items to hire out to members, especially beginners.

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<sup>56</sup> PC Mavis Davidson 11 October 1994. The average weekly wage for skilled male workers in 1935 was between £4 and £5 - *New Zealand Official 1990 Yearbook* p378

<sup>57</sup> C E Ferwick p7; Harrowfield p2-4

<sup>58</sup> NZAJ 1921 p108, 1922 advert p114,p162-3, adverts 1934-40. By 1940 the four main cities and Hamilton, Arthur's Pass and Invercargill had shops with some specialisation in mountain equipment. Arthur Ellis & Co began 'Fairy Down' sleeping bags (M Kelly *Mill in the Valley* Dunedin 1977 p36,46) and others also made sleeping bags - J J McCaskey Wellington & Alex Thompson Dunedin, who also made pack bags - NZAJ 1932 facing p126, adverts 1936 etc. Shorter japara parkas, wind and waterproof, were available by mid 1930s - 'Relax' advert NZAJ 1935, Alex Thompson advert NZAJ 1937

<sup>59</sup> PC Russell Edwards 19 January 1994

<sup>60</sup> NZAJ 1935 p73-8

The purchase of equipment was a financial investment since the cost of mountaineering gear remained high compared to average income. So the acquisition of equipment signified not just the intention of mountaineering but also a long-term commitment to mountain recreation. Prices varied in the 1930s according to quality and whether items were New Zealand made or not. Sleeping bags might be kapok or wool, but a down filled bag was preferred and would range in price from £2 10s to £7. A reasonable rucksack would be at least £2 and possibly over £4. The ice axe had to be of good quality, at about £2, and crampons were a little more. Adequate nailed boots cost about £1. They most frequently needed replacement, and for comfort they might be made to measure.<sup>61</sup> Not all clothing would have to be bought specially, but a jacket or later a parka was needed, costing between £1 5s and £2 10s. A woollen singlet at £1 5s 6d was helpful, as were long johns at £1 8s 6d, while several pairs of wool sox would be needed at perhaps 3s 6d a pair. Each independent party needed a tent, costing £3 10s to £6, depending on the material and whether or not it had a fly and waterproof floor. A stove from overseas would be between 15s and £1 7s 6d and a rope was needed for every two or three climbers. 100ft [30m] of 1¼in [30mm] yachting manila might cost only 12s 6d, but many climbers preferred to use imported alpine rope costing perhaps twice as much. Altogether a climber might spend between £12 and £25 on personal equipment and more on party gear.<sup>62</sup>

## TRAMPING - A NEW MOUNTAIN ACTIVITY AND ITS FORMALISATION

A new independent form of mountain recreation, known in New Zealand as tramping, came to be the basis for much of the interwar climbing. Energetic walking in the hills and mountains was not unique to New Zealand, but the form it took was. Tramping was self-contained hill or mountain travel on foot

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<sup>61</sup> *Evening Post* 27 April 1974; CM 1975 p15; PC Betsy Anderson 16 January 1994

<sup>62</sup> NZAJ 1921 p108, 1934-40 adverts



which required pack-carrying, especially for overnight or longer expeditions which used tents or unserviced huts. There were similarities with the Outdoor Movement in Britain and with walking and hiking clubs in Europe and North America. However, the cross-country nature of New Zealand tramping, and the self-sufficiency of overnight accommodation in tents which was often involved, distinguished it from recreational walking elsewhere which tended to use more permanent shelter.<sup>63</sup> The pattern in New Zealand was established by the formation of the Tararua Tramping Club in 1919, not by influence from overseas.

Recreational journeying on foot had begun in New Zealand before the First World War in places where sufficient exploration had been done to make them known and available. In the Otago mountains, the Greenstone,<sup>64</sup> Hollyford and Eglinton valleys were used, with Dore Pass, to connect Lake Wakatipu to the Milford track.<sup>65</sup> In other ranges, such as the Tararuas, exploration and tramping developed together from the later nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> After the war tramping appealed because of its combination of exercise, exploration and independence in a natural environment. In tramping, temporary freedom from the conventionalities of 'civilised' society could be gained at relatively low cost. Summits were not the aim of the activity, though they might be reached, but through tramping some people took up expeditionary climbing. Tramping would get them into the mountains where they could then choose to ascend one or more peaks. In other countries alpine climbing developed out of rock climbing, but it did not so obviously stem from hiking, rambling or tramping-

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<sup>63</sup> H Walker "The Popularisation of the Outdoor Movement, 1900-1940" *BJSH* Vol 2 No 2 September 1985; A Holt "Hikers and Ramblers: Surviving a Thirties' Fashion" *IJHS* Vol 4 No 1 May 1987; Hansen "British Mountaineering" p476-81

<sup>64</sup> *AJHR* H-2 1909 p1-2 - opening up of Greenstone.

<sup>65</sup> G Fenwick *Lake Wakatipu to Lake Te Anau* Dunedin 1911; W Sinclair *Guide to Wondrous Wakatipu* Dunedin 1914 p38-41; D McKenzie p65,72-3. Schoolboys tramped in this area during the First World War - M G McInnes photo albums NZAC Arch

<sup>66</sup> B D A Greig ed *Tararua Story* Wellington 1946 p13,18; R Kerr *A Chronology of the Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges* author Levin 3rd ed 1995 p9-15

type activity. By the 1930s most New Zealand tramping clubs had at least a few people whose main focus was on the peaks, not on the valleys and passes, and tramping and climbing tended to develop together at this time under the label mountaineering.

Tramping was considerably extended in range and scope between the wars. Initially, in the 1920s, activity was centred on local day trips, often reached by the developing public transport system. There was a range of ages and occupations and women were usually involved. As the number of recreationalists in the hills increased markedly, and they gained experience, the tendency was to look for bigger hills, and to venture further afield into different mountain areas, seeking the challenges of the unknown, of variety and of larger scale. Relatively unexplored valleys and unclimbed peaks were re-discovered and mapped for recreational purposes throughout the South Island and in the North Island ranges. Though lack of leisure time remained a problem, trips became longer and more difficult as trampers sought greater adventure. This meant heavier packs to be carried, which could make the recreation more difficult for women. The age of participants dropped during the 1920s, to the point where mountaineers were likely to be in their late teens when they began. At such an age they had few formal responsibilities in life and by their early twenties they were experienced enough to aim more specifically at the summits. Longer trips and desire for more frequent mountain activity gave an advantage, through the opportunities of their holidays, to students at university and teachers' colleges. Though they often had little money, they were to become a substantial proportion of trampers and climbers, and young skilled workers were also common. After education or training all such people could more easily afford their mountain recreation, except in the worst of the Depression years.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Sources are records of clubs cited below, notes 70 & 80.

Out of tramping came the creation and development of a variety of mountaineering clubs which provided a new and comprehensive formalisation for mountain sports. Such bodies were one of the most notable features of New Zealand tramping and climbing from 1919, and they had considerable influence on how mountain recreation developed. Many began as organisations for tramping, and that remained most common. Some became focused on skiing, a few concentrated on climbing, and many combined activities. In the interwar period these clubs developed rapidly and they often included a great variety of people in their membership. Those keen on mountain recreation wished to share their mountain world and to enjoy it with other enthusiasts. Initial groupings were often based on people already interested in day walks, whether friends, family, work or chance acquaintance. Clubs might be formed after many years of group activity, or on early excursions, but they resulted from the tramping.<sup>68</sup> Once established they provided instruction in skills, companions in the mountains, and a social context for trampers and climbers in town. Equipment and transport were other services often supplied to members. These urban organisations also encouraged a valuing of both physical recreation in the mountains and of the mountain areas themselves.<sup>69</sup>

Most clubs went through similar processes of development which in time supported and encouraged independence in the hills and mountains. Often there was quick progress from local day trips to hill and valley tramping of greater duration and difficulty. Clubs became an important agency by which tracks were formed and huts were built, and such practical activity might for a time be the central focus. The creation of such 'civilisation' also provided quicker access and advanced bases which, with increased fitness and knowledge, encouraged greater activity and autonomy. As trampers looked further afield and broadened their activities, such places as the Tararuas, Egmont and Ruapehu became most significant for activity in the North Island.

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<sup>68</sup> Harper *Memories* p171

<sup>69</sup> This led to the involvement of some mountaineers and clubs in the conservation movement and the establishment of national parks.

Similarly, Arthur's Pass and the head of Lake Wakatipu became centres of attention in the South Island. Although important for recreation in their own right, these areas were also seen as stepping stones to bigger country. In smaller mountains closer to home people could develop the independence and skills which might be successfully translated to unknown valleys and mountains or to the higher and more difficult peaks. Some members concentrated on exploration while others looked for first ascents or new routes on already climbed mountains. Through the activities and processes of clubs there was a marked expansion of what was possible in mountain recreation in the interwar period.<sup>70</sup>

Initially tramping which had Wellington as its base was the stimulus and model for the new developments. The Tararua Tramping Club (TTC) was formed in 1919 after some years of tramping by an increasing group seeking recreation out of the city.<sup>71</sup> The founders were predominantly middle-aged business and professional men, and one of them, Fred Vosseler, had wider mountain experience which included Tongariro National Park and the Mt Cook area.<sup>72</sup> Almost from the beginning women were "eligible for membership"<sup>73</sup> but a more significant development was the increasing youth of members. Clerks, apprentices and students joined, and connections with the Victoria University College Tramping Club and Scouts in Wellington became important too. The VUCTC was the first of several university tramping clubs to be formed, in 1921,<sup>74</sup> and these were important for producing mountaineers who after

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<sup>70</sup> Many clubs show this overall process: Greig *Tararua Story*; F L Johnston ed *Twenty-one Years with Boots and Pack* Auckland 1946; CM 1975; I McAlpine compiler *The Taranaki Alpine Club* New Plymouth 1980; S Woodham ed *Christchurch Tramping Club 1932-82* Christchurch 1982; S Forbes & I McNab *Alpine Sports* Auckland 1986; S Britain ed *West Coast Alpine Club Golden Jubilee 1936-86* Greymouth 1986

<sup>71</sup> Greig p13; Kerr p14-5; C Maclean *Tararua* Wellington 1994 p126-9

<sup>72</sup> "Extracts from the Haast Hut Visitors Book" CMA; Greig p15,103; W P Mead p21-2; Maclean p128-9,166

<sup>73</sup> Greig p68

<sup>74</sup> Maclean p131-3

finishing study became members of other clubs. The TTC, because it had knowledge and experience, as well as huts, equipment and organisation, was of direct assistance to the VUCTC and to the Hutt Valley Tramping Club formed in 1923.<sup>75</sup> It was also a model for others later. Like most clubs, the TTC put its initial energy into exploration of local ranges but there was a concurrent widening of activity elsewhere in the North Island and visits to South Island mountains, which helped establish the validity of guideless mountaineering.<sup>76</sup>

Tramping developed quickly and extensively throughout New Zealand and many other mountain clubs were formed and active throughout New Zealand from the 1920s. Two of the earliest were at opposite ends of the country - the Otago Tramping (& Mountaineering) Club, 1923,<sup>77</sup> and the Auckland Tramping Club (ATC), 1925. Members of this latter club did not seek to climb as early or as much as some others, but otherwise its progress was fairly typical of organisational development in the interwar period. It made an early decision "to tramp for tramping's sake with no competitive spirit, to keep Club fees as low as possible so that none are debarred from membership by high expenses". Like other clubs, the ATC was also conscious that it was pioneering a recreation because "tramping was - to Aucklanders - something new and strange". Newspapers printed articles and photographs of club outings to publicise the novel activity. The ATC began with day trips but "in the spring of 1928 there came a marked change in its activities. The average age was rapidly dropping, and tramps became longer and tougher".<sup>78</sup> This more difficult tramping often

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<sup>75</sup> Greig p13,15,68,99-101

<sup>76</sup> *AJHR* 1924 p7, 1925 p8; Greig p14,29-39,50-4,56-7,59,63-4. The most spectacular early guideless climbing by a couple of Tararua teenagers, Jack Ross and Tim Fitzherbert was not entirely accepted - *Press* 30 May 1925 WAK; *AJHR* 1925 p8 (Fitzherbert written Fitzgerald); *NZAJ* 1925 p283-6

<sup>77</sup> OT&MC Archives Hocken

<sup>78</sup> Johnston p5-6

led people into climbing.<sup>79</sup> Many similar clubs were established, for tramping, climbing and skiing, stimulated by changes in society, as well as by existing mountain recreation and the publicity it received.<sup>80</sup>

By 1930 the tramping clubs were leading people into climbing in a do-it-yourself sort of way, largely independent of both mountain guides and the New Zealand Alpine Club. The NZAC had come back into being in the early 1920s without quite deciding what its purpose or role was. It had little collective life and the main evidence for its existence was the irregular publication of the *New Zealand Alpine Journal* from March 1921. This sought to record alpine activity of the present and past. However, apart from the occasional moralising or warning comment about possible dangers and difficulties of mountain climbing, the NZAC did little to help people to begin climbing, and its membership was restricted and elitist. This was clearly stated, once again, by its President, AP Harper, in 1921:

In 1891 the Alpine Club (London) was...the only club with a qualification for membership which called for a high standard of work to pass, and which made it an honour to be elected. We determined to found a club here on the same lines, and to make membership of the N.Z.A.C. an honour to be sought after... I trust this high standard will be jealously maintained.<sup>81</sup>

The problem remained that the NZAC, especially Harper, expected people to be climbers when they joined. It was a policy which limited membership and made the club an exclusive group. In 1921 there were few climbers in New Zealand and moves to broaden the club and turn the subscriber into a sort of apprentice member were not immediately successful.<sup>82</sup> In contrast, other

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<sup>79</sup> PC F Newmarch 17 November 1995. He was an ATC member in the later 1920s.

<sup>80</sup> Alpine Sports Club (Auckland), Levin-Waiopahu TC, Manawatu TC, Massey Agricultural College TC, Mount Egmont AC, Stratford MC, Taranaki AC - Scanlan *Egmont Story* p105; J Graham p67; M Fuller ed *The Story of a Tramping and Skiing Club* Palmerston North 1978; McAlpine p6-13; Burrell p7,169-72; Forbes & McNab p10,231-3

<sup>81</sup> NZAJ 1921 p7

<sup>82</sup> NZAJ 1921 p8, 1925 p287-293, 1958 p421-2. Only three active climbers were elected as subscribers in the 1920s: A Sutton-Turner 1920, R Harper & J Sim 1929 - Membership Lists 1891-1932 NZAC Arch; NZAJ 1937 p157-165

emerging mountain clubs sought members from all walks of life and, aware of the general mountaineering inexperience, encouraged people to join such bodies so that they might learn to travel safely in the mountains.

It was largely pressure from other mountain clubs which led to greater democratisation of the NZAC and a substantial increase in its membership and activity in the 1930s. This development was due entirely to the formation of local sections of the NZAC which could act like local clubs, though the New Zealand-wide organisation also created many useful connections of personnel and facilities. Late in 1930 the first regional section was established in Dunedin. The intervention of Harper and Frank Wright, the pre-war Otago climber, and a desire to combine energies for the good of mountaineering, saw the formation of the Otago Section of NZAC. This supplanted two other emerging mountain clubs and quickly developed considerable mountaineering energy.<sup>83</sup> Many other regional sections were formed in the 1930s based on the greater activity by younger climbers which was already occurring. Often tramping club members who climbed also joined the NZAC which thus benefited from the efforts of other organisations. It was not till sections were established that 'associate' membership became accepted by the leadership of the NZAC as a sort of provisional active membership, replacing the concept of the subscriber. It was pressure from the sections which brought about this reality though the new name and category were not formalised till as late as 1937.<sup>84</sup>

With the NZAC not staking a claim to leadership of mountaineering in the 1920s, and the government no longer involved, the way was left open for some of the newly formed mountain clubs to provide direction for the recreation. One which did so was the Tararua TC, significant as a model and because it was active throughout New Zealand. The other which was particularly important for climbing in the interwar years was the Canterbury

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<sup>83</sup> NZAJ 1931 p229,233-4; Harper PP NZAC Arch

<sup>84</sup> NZAJ 1932 p144-5, 1937 p169

Mountaineering Club (CMC), based in Christchurch. The CMC was formed primarily for tramping in 1925,<sup>85</sup> but it soon outgrew local trips which could be reached by public transport. Membership increased steadily, the club held camps, used the railway to reach the upper Waimakariri valley, and built its first hut in memory of its youthful founder 'Charlie' Carrington.<sup>86</sup> At the beginning, like most clubs, the CMC had a number of older members. However, this became very much an organisation for young men since no mountaineering qualification for membership was required. In the CMC the single-minded energy and enthusiasm of youth stood out, in contrast to the more measured performance of guided climbers and older NZAC members.

It was the CMC which set firmly in place the interwar pattern of independent guideless climbing based on mountain exploration. At Easter 1930 the CMC changed its main focus from tramping to expeditionary climbing,<sup>87</sup> and this was emulated by the developing sections of the NZAC and small groups from many other clubs. The CMC set to work to explore and climb its hinterland where there were many first ascents to be made, and soon it adopted a proprietary attitude to the area from Arthur's Pass to the headwaters of the Rakaia and Rangitata rivers.<sup>88</sup> CMC members were not the only mountaineers active in this area, but they dominated, and set new standards of fitness, energy, achievement and independence for the whole of New Zealand. They perceived themselves as pioneers in terms of both exploration and climbing, and they publicised their activity in those terms to encourage approval from

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<sup>85</sup> It began as the Christchurch Tramping Club, then became the Canterbury Mountaineering and Tramping Club in 1928, though the Tramping part of the name was soon ignored - *NZ Life* 1926-7 CMC Records CMA; CM 1932 p1-4, 1950 p67-71, 1975 p12-13,15,24,184; C E Fenwick "A Brief History of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club" CMA

<sup>86</sup> Carrington, 19, stimulated and then led the visit of the Canterbury Progress League, which was interested in tourist development, to the upper Waimakariri river at Easter 1925. This led to the formation of the CMC - *Press* 7 January 1925 p6,9, then 13,14,15,23 January; 5,17,20 February, 14,15 April, 7 May; "Report of the Expedition Organised by the Canterbury Progress League..." CMA

<sup>87</sup> CM 1932 passim, 1933 p1-7 & passim, 1975 p9,27-31 & passim; CMC Records CMA



the wider society. In the 1930s the CMC led the development of independent mountaineering in New Zealand.

Such was the mountain activity based on clubs in the 1930s that more overt competition than ever before became apparent at both individual and organisational levels. The CMC was outspoken in its rejection of guided climbing and the elitism of qualification for membership which the NZAC still maintained. Personalities could be a problem, and Harper's attitudes, and at times patronising tone, were not always tolerated.<sup>89</sup> However, the CMC was also different from all other organisations for mountain recreation because it was the only one which did not accept women members.<sup>90</sup> It was also more energetic and intense than most. All these factors, and pressure for achievement, led to rivalry, especially between the CMC and the NZAC after its Canterbury section was formed in 1932. Though climbers might join both, the two clubs competed for membership. When the CMC began to develop a country-wide organisation, through the formation of branches and close association with existing bodies elsewhere, it seemed to threaten the NZAC's monopoly of climbing at a national level.<sup>91</sup> The competition between clubs was most intense in the early 1930s and gave extra energy and spice to mountaineering achievement. In the longer term there was usually co-operation and sharing between individual members, but at the club level differences remained.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Chris Maclean (*Tararua* p167) writes of the development of a sort of territorial tribalism which was part of club mountaineering, and this applied to the CMC.

<sup>89</sup> The Christchurch climber Archie Scott also created friction - Comments written in *BWI*; *Press* 11,12,15 September 1931, p13,19,11, 5,6,7,11 February 1935 *BWI*; letter Harper to R Ellis 26 March 1940 D W Foster PP NZAC Arch; *NZAJ* 1955 p213-7

<sup>90</sup> Women members were originally allowed, even hoped for: *NZ Life* 30 September & 16 December 1925. Then they were excluded by a narrow majority on 13 September 1927, *NZ Life* October 1927 CMC Records CMA, CM 1975 p184. Attitudes sometimes became extremely anti-women and they might be omitted from club records. Compare accounts of same trip: CM 1975 p107-9, *NZAJ* 1932 p82-92

<sup>91</sup> See for example CM 1936 p100-5

<sup>92</sup> The differences in approach and attitude surfaced with the publication of "The Mountains" *Making New Zealand* Vol.I No10 Wellington 1939, written by John Pascoe a strong CMC supporter though also an NZAC member - *Evening Post* 19 & 25 March 1940; *ODT* 12 & 23 March, 5 & 10 April 1940; *NZAJ* 1940 p201-7; CM 1940

Although each mountain club had a focus and personality of its own, depending on its membership, organisation, location, and its principal activity, all of them provided similar services for their members. They usually made available, often in an informal way, knowledge, companionship and facilities to anyone who wished to be involved. By their very existence clubs encouraged mountain recreation and their systems enabled people to participate. Individual activity was always important, but the establishment of this form of organisation for mountaineering tended to subsume the individual within the group. The enthusiasm and activity of mountaineers in the collective situation could overcome great problems, and created a group dynamic which was self-perpetuating. In the inter-war period, the formation of mountain clubs was the most significant factor in the development of climbing. They took over many of the roles of mountain guides and provided a new, more inclusive, infrastructure for mountain recreation throughout New Zealand.

A communal context for mountaineers, away from the setting of their sporting activity, was provided by the fact that the clubs were essentially urban. Mutual support in a variety of practical and psychological ways could occur in a more general fashion out of the mountains. Regular meetings and social functions<sup>93</sup> conformed to the pattern of many associations and helped make mountaineering more acceptable to the wider community. Such occasions had greater purpose for the participants, since they provided ready companionship, encouraged the sharing of information and common experience, and allowed the organisation of mountain trips. Through a variety of encounters novices could begin to fit into the mountaineering community and learn about the actual recreation. Participation was always altering and evolving as members'

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p98-9; D W Foster PP NZAC Arch. Argument obscured the issue of Pascoe's accuracy and coverage of the development of climbing. Both can be criticised.

<sup>93</sup> Greig p73-5 gives a good idea of the Tararua TC's early social activities. Sometimes they took place in mountain huts rather than in town.

life circumstances were modified, which meant ever-changing possibilities for mountain companionship. Just as importantly, the urban meetings of mountain clubs were central to the socialisation of the group. Mountaineering itself was often a small group activity, and it was in the more 'civilised' town setting, or extensions of it such as day trips, camps and hut building, where the whole club was knitted together. Some women found it easier to fit into a club through social functions. Within the larger organisation smaller groups formed of those who knew each other well and often combined their efforts. Pairing up could also occur in such a context and marriages of club members were not uncommon. Club activities other than actual tramping or climbing also allowed people of both sexes who could no longer be active to keep in touch with the recreation and friends after employment, marriage and children had limited mountaineering.

Clubs had much to offer their members in practical terms as each created a body of knowledge which theoretically any member could tap into. Initially few people knew the mountains, or had the skills and equipment needed to tramp or climb,<sup>94</sup> but a group could make rapid progress by pooling experience. Notes were made on routes, maps were drawn and photos taken, food and gear lists worked out, and these were usually shared to the benefit of all. Stores of equipment were built up and made available to members, and individuals borrowed from each other, which eased the introduction into the mountains for beginners in both a practical and a financial sense. Sharing and organisation could also make transport more available and economic, which benefited all. In their 'local' mountains, groups formed tracks and routes as part of getting to know the territory, and built huts and bridges to provide accommodation and access. Within a few years of beginning mountaineering, most clubs provided some form of mountaineering instruction. This usually

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<sup>94</sup> Even in areas which had been fairly well explored before there was a considerable sense among the new independent mountaineers of starting from scratch.

became more formal over time in lectures, articles, camps and instruction courses, as numbers and mountain accidents increased. With this sort of assistance novices of both sexes could more quickly come to feel at home in the outdoor world, and be safe there, though women were never expected to be as skilled or as independent as men.

Through instruction and the commonality of association, new guidelines were worked out for all tramping and climbing, to replace those determined by guides. Certain customs of mountaineering became so firmly established that they were almost equivalent to set rules. Older climbers, perhaps forgetful of their own youthful escapades, were most likely to be concerned about safety and about the public perceptions of climbing. Club leaders were often, in a sense, 'in loco parentis', and they were aware of both the inexperience and hot-headedness of youth. Keen young climbers tended to be narrowly focused on their own mountain goals, which might include attempting new techniques and routes, and the risks they took were often considerable. Established standards were needed for people without experience, and clubs provided these partly to defuse criticism from society. However, the very concept of rules contradicted the greater independence in the mountains which clubs so much fostered. Furthermore, in the freedom of an expanding recreation it was not always clear what were safe practices, and sometimes this was not determined till after accidents.<sup>95</sup>

The successful organisation of mountaineers, and the increase in their number, led to a new national association, the Federated Mountain Clubs or FMC. This was a recognition that mountain groups, whatever their individual focus, had common interests, and that a single voice should speak for the growing number of New Zealanders seeking mountain recreation. A dozen clubs were

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<sup>95</sup> Mt Trent accident, 27 March 1937, killing three, revealed some of the problems of a large party of differing experiences and equipment - NZA/ 1937 p130-8, 1938 p311

represented at a meeting in Wellington on 11 September 1930.<sup>96</sup> They agreed to form a federation and a constitution was formally adopted on 21 March 1931. AP Harper, with the support of the NZAC, was the instigator, but many others could also see the need for a national, and more political, voice to put pressure on government and commercial operators on behalf of trampers, skiers and climbers. At the same time Harper was campaigning for the registration of guides, to improve conditions for them and to provide greater mountain safety, and the issue of the guides became confused with the issue of general mountaineering safety.<sup>97</sup> Five deaths on the Tasman glacier on 19 January 1930<sup>98</sup> and a further death on Mt Ruapehu in August 1931<sup>99</sup> increased public awareness of danger in the mountains and gave emotional weight to moves to organise and even regulate recreation there, which was not what the mountain clubs wanted.<sup>100</sup> The government even considered preventing inexperienced people from entering the mountains, but this was impracticable, and, with other more pressing concerns during the Depression, legislation for both mountain guides and safety was allowed to lapse.<sup>101</sup> However, after original hesitations,<sup>102</sup> the FMC gained in credibility. By 1936 32 clubs belonged, two thirds of them focused on mountaineering, and it was normal for new ones to join when established. Only the CMC stood aside at that stage, not joining till 1938.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Burrell p7 lists the clubs; NZAJ 1931 p229 states 11 clubs.

<sup>97</sup> NZAJ 1925 p281, 1926 p350-5, 1931 p237-40; *Press* 3,5,7,9 September 1931 p9,16,8,15

<sup>98</sup> *Press* 21,22,23 January 1930 all p10; NZAJ 1930 p119-29

<sup>99</sup> See newspapers such as *NZ Herald & Press* 31 August to 9 September 1931.

<sup>100</sup> Not all reaction to the deaths was condemnatory. *Press* editorials 21 January 1930 p10, 2 September 1931 p8 considered that the risks of climbing were not high.

<sup>101</sup> *Sun* 2,4,5 September, 30 October 1931 & *NZ Truth* 10 September 1931 - BWI; *Press* 5,7,9 September p16,8,15, 17,27 October p8,15, 9,10,11 November 1931 p11,9,12; NZAJ 1932 p114; Harper PP NZAC Arch; Burrell p33

<sup>102</sup> Burrell p9-10. There was a lack of understanding about the continued independence of clubs, and Harper prejudiced some people against the FMC.

<sup>103</sup> NZAJ 1936 p373; Burrell p169-72

The major objectives and activities of the FMC were clear in its early years and they covered a multiplicity of mountain issues. There was particular interest in "the welfare and correct control of the National Reserves", including the existing National Parks, especially in matters of access. The "Nation's birthright" was to be kept out of the hands of profiteers, such as the Mount Cook Company, who sought to commercialise public land. So there was a public watchdog purpose from the start, and this also led the FMC into a conservationist role. The FMC helped develop the concept of Forest Parks from the 1930s and it looked for more national parks with better administration which would include user representatives on park boards.<sup>104</sup> A variety of other issues were given FMC attention, such as the control of noxious animals, the licensing of guides and tariffs on mountain equipment. There was involvement with mountain nomenclature from 1934 through the Geographic Board, then an honorary body. The FMC collated all available information on mountain huts and maps, and distributed that material to member clubs.<sup>105</sup> There was especial concern about mountain safety. Accidents detracted from mountain recreation, and the FMC attempted to prevent them through instruction. The main tuition provided by the FMC came in the form of publications, especially the manual *Safety in the Mountains* from 1937.<sup>106</sup> There was also a desire to learn from accidents. A further development by 1936 was the establishment "in co-operation with the Commissioner of Police, [of] a National scheme for the organisation of any necessary searches." From that time a local and then national system of Search and Rescue was slowly developed.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> NZAJ 1936 p373-4, 1937 p166, 1938 p290-1,332, 1940 p273-4, 1945 p81-6; Burrell p9-13,81-6,94,106,114-5,145

<sup>105</sup> NZAJ 1936 p375-7, 1938 p331,333, 1939 p136-7, 1940 p273-4, 1945 p81-2; Burrell p19-27,33-4,154

<sup>106</sup> *Safety in the Mountains* Wellington 1937, 1938, 1949 etc; NZAJ 1937 p167, 1938 p331; Burrell p61-2

<sup>107</sup> NZAJ 1936 p376-7, 1937 p167, 1938 p319,331,333-4, 1939 p136; Greig p106; MacAlpine p28; Burrell p57-63,75-8,130-43; Forbes & McNab p72-5

The formation of the FMC was a sign of increasing maturity in mountain clubs and mountain recreation, and a recognition that there had been sufficient progress to make a national organisation desirable. Its range of concerns showed a willingness on the part of trampers, climbers and skiers to tackle the more general problems which they perceived to be facing their leisure pursuits. The clubs and the FMC provided the structures by which mountain recreation could be expanded and the broader context of it considered. At the same time as this combination of mountain recreationalists, the mountain summits began to attract more of them. By 1931 there had been sufficient development of both tramping and mountain clubs to provide a springboard for a great expansion of climbing. This was to bring a greater range of participants, considerable geographical spread, new styles of climbing, and the increased domination of it by men.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### A NEW INDEPENDENCE AND STYLE 1920 - 1940

The development of significant local climbing practices, based on tramping and clubs, created a form of mountain recreation which was more specific to New Zealand than any which had previously existed. A larger, more diverse group took up tramping and climbing which was independent of both guides and imperial models. They made mountaineering a national sport because they practised it in the hills and mountains throughout the country. Connections with climbing throughout the world continued to be made, but with one exception they had little impact. In contrast to much of the climbing overseas, especially in Europe, the New Zealand version was based on exploration and re-exploration of little known valleys and ranges. Heavy pack-carrying and practical skills were required for this independent mountaineering. Such characteristics, in conjunction with men's domination of the recreation, began to link mountaineering more securely to New Zealand's male physical culture.

### AN EXPANDING RECREATION

Those who went tramping and climbing in the interwar period were a more numerous and varied group than ever before. The proportion of climbing visitors from overseas dropped considerably and now New Zealanders dominated mountain recreation in their own country. Mountaineering was expanded through the increased possibilities provided by the 'discovery' of many more tramping and climbing areas throughout New Zealand. It became less and less necessary to begin climbing in the central Southern Alps where the great peaks were to be found. Clubs provided an urban base which also encouraged many more people to participate, and these new mountaineers were more diverse than previously, in terms of age, income and social status. Many of the new mountaineers were young, and they brought energy,



enthusiasm and new attitudes which accepted challenge and found strength in group activity. Substantial numbers of women became involved in tramping, and some climbed, but as longer and more difficult tramping and expeditionary climbing came to dominate mountaineering in the 1930s women became a smaller proportion of participants.

Independence in the mountains was one important aim, especially for men, and much learning occurred through do-it-yourself experience. The transition from tramping to climbing also tended to come about in similar fashion. It was the clubs which provided the means for most individuals and small groups to become competent enough to go where they wished in the mountains. The club context for the move into climbing took time to develop but by the 1930s strong groups of 'tough' mountaineers had considerable mountain knowledge and climbing proficiency and were well capable of ascending a variety of peaks. though there were other approaches. A few mountaineers used guides to help develop the more specialist skills of climbing, and others found time as student guides at the Hermitage gave the necessary opportunity. The students who worked as track-cutters in the Hollyford-Milford region in the early 1920s not only took up climbing,<sup>1</sup> but one of them, George Moir, helped others venture into the Otago and Fiordland mountains by producing a very popular guide book in 1925, known ever since as 'Moir's Guide Book'.<sup>2</sup>

The number of climbers increased markedly in the interwar period, based on the great development of tramping. In the 1913-14 season fewer than fifty people did any climbing in New Zealand, that total including ten guides, eight climbers from overseas, and six women.<sup>3</sup> Climbing increased at the Hermitage

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<sup>1</sup> AJHR 1922 p6; ODT 16 January 1925; NZAJ 1926 p313-7, 1931 p151, 1957 p146-8, 1979 p105; Ede p46-63

<sup>2</sup> G Moir *Guide Book to the Tourist Routes of the Great Southern Lakes including Te Anau, Wakatipu, Manapouri, Wanaka, Hawea, Monowai, Hauroto, etc and the Fiords of Western Otago N.Z.* [full title] Dunedin 1925 (3s). This guide book, in two parts since 1959/61, is still available in much revised editions.

<sup>3</sup> OW 11 February 1914; AJHR 1914 p5-7; NZAJ 1921 p20-4, 1974 p108; Acheson p199; W P Mead p18

during the First World War so even though the number of independent and overseas climbers dropped noticeably, there were still over forty climbers in 1917-18. Only five of these were guides but seventeen were women.<sup>4</sup> Fifteen years later for the 1932-33 season the *New Zealand Alpine Journal* and *Canterbury Mountaineer* together listed nearly 250 climbers. Virtually all were New Zealanders, and they represented perhaps less than half the total number of mountaineers in New Zealand since only the higher ascents and more difficult expeditions in the South Island were recorded. Yet only 13 of all the climbers mentioned were women and nine of those climbed with guides.<sup>5</sup> Though there were many women trampers, the number of women climbers was not increasing in total and it had dropped markedly in proportion to the number of men. At the Hermitage in 1932-3 there were twice as many guided climbs as unguided ones, and guided dominance continued in the Mt Cook area till the Second World War. However, a large proportion of New Zealand climbing occurred in other areas where the number of independent male mountaineers continued to rise during the 1930s.<sup>6</sup>

The youth of many of the interwar mountain adventurers was remarkable. They were usually much younger when they began mountain recreation than the guided climbers of both the same period and before the First World War. A pattern which had emerged in independent mountaineering by 1930 was that people of both sexes were attracted to the mountains in their later teens, while at school or soon after. They often had little money, especially in the Depression, but because they were less established in society, they had greater freedom. Their individual activity was frequent and energetic, and they supported each other with enthusiasm through the process of learning to tramp and climb. With increasing years many found a multiplicity of interests in the mountains, including the flora, fauna and geology, as well as exploration of

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<sup>4</sup> *AJHR* 1918 p5-6

<sup>5</sup> There were 24 women out of a similar total of climbers in *NZAJ* & *CM* 1934.

<sup>6</sup> *NZAJ* & *CM* 1934-39

little known places.<sup>7</sup> Whether young mountaineers quickly included climbing in their activity or not, they achieved a considerable degree of mountain independence and by their early twenties many of them had built up a depth of experience. Then a number of years with a substantial focus on climbing could be possible before employment, marriage and children became significant factors.<sup>8</sup>

Not only were mountaineers younger and more numerous, but they displayed a much greater variety of employment and social status.<sup>9</sup> Students and a variety of professionals, such as teachers, lawyers, accountants, engineers and doctors, were common and tended to dominate in climbing.<sup>10</sup> The holidays of students allowed them greater time in the mountains, and their later employment might provide a financial advantage. However, a diverse range of people in other jobs also took up tramping and climbing, the sorts of people who had hardly climbed at all between 1900 and 1914. There were labourers and apprentices, shop-keepers, a variety of tradesmen, and clerks in all sorts of office jobs, including banks and government offices. Even a few farmers and farm hands went into the mountains for recreation.<sup>11</sup> With the range of backgrounds and occupations came an egalitarianism far removed from earlier class-based patterns of climbing.

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<sup>7</sup> John Pascoe was one whose greatest pleasure in exploration - see for example CM 1937 p55. Brian Wyn Irwin was similar - CM 1942 p43; NZAJ 1942 p210-1

<sup>8</sup> Gerald (Jock) Nanson is one example of a climber who suspended mountain activity in the 1930s because of his work and family responsibilities. Most of his climbing came after he retired in 1967 - NZAJ 1990 p157

<sup>9</sup> A variety of written sources and personal communications enables some generalisations to be made. See especially CM 1933 p102-3, 1934 p94,101, 1935 p130,139, 1936 p107-8,114-5, 1937 p129,137-8, 1938 p112-3, 1939 p123-4; Greig p13,100. NZAJ 1921-40 and *Tararua Trumper* 1928-40 hardly mention occupation of members. Obituaries throughout NZAJ & CM are helpful.

<sup>10</sup> Of the 24 NZAC or CMC members killed in the Second World War, over half had some form of tertiary education - NZAJ & CM obituaries 1940-45

<sup>11</sup> NZAJ 1931 p155, 1932 p46-53, 1989 p143; Pascoe *Unclimbed* p29; J Malloch *From the Tops* Invercargill 1992 p33-47; Maclean p166. See also CM references note 9 above.

Other new attitudes developed among all these independent mountaineers, especially in terms of what they expected from their mountain recreation and what they felt it was possible to accomplish. In exploratory mountaineering, which became so prominent, the enjoyment could come from a great variety of experiences, even from bad weather and failure to reach a summit. The public face of club mountaineering might stress useful exploration and safe practices,<sup>12</sup> but at the more personal level the activity was relatively self-centred, focused both on the individual and on the small group. As clubs developed it became possible for members to ignore public opinion, such was the strength of the group ethos within the clubs and the importance of like-minded company and friendship. The key expression of the new attitude was an enthusiasm for the recreation which was sustained at a high and consistent level year round, not occasionally as was the previous pattern. Most participants made frequent mountain trips. Thus fitness and skills were maintained or improved, which led to the satisfaction of greater achievement. The keenness, vigour and determination among many mountaineers was often sufficient to overcome the problems posed by poverty and public attitudes.

To these mountaineering enthusiasts there suddenly seemed to be a plethora of places to practice their recreation, and they spread into all the hill and mountain country of both North and South Islands. The expansion of mountaineering into so many areas helped bring 'civilisation' into much more of New Zealand's natural environment which was now being discovered for a new recreational purpose. Although individuals and clubs attempted to make use of previous exploration, there was often a feeling that this was new discovery as well as new recreation. Considerable independence and a much greater variety of abilities was needed for success in the developing exploratory mountaineering. Guided climbing was little use as an example and much of the civilised urban world had to be deliberately left behind. In the mountains hard work and pioneering skills, such as the capacity to cross rivers and find routes

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<sup>12</sup> *Press* 12 August 1932 p10; 13 July 1933 p16

both in and above the bush, became essential. These requirements made mountaineering an intellectual as well as a physical challenge. Back in town, routes, photographs and maps would be analysed and co-ordinated to define the mountains, but this activity also linked the 'civilised' world and what was, in the interwar period, an ever-enlarging mountain world. Competition developed to be first, not just to summits, but to discover the unknown and to solve topographical 'problems'. High value was given to the ability to endure heavy packs and long days at considerable speed, coping with difficult conditions and topography. These were the characteristics of those who became known as the 'hard' men of mountaineering. Their individual feats were considerable, but a greater influence was in opening up mountain possibilities for others.<sup>13</sup>

The geographical spread of mountaineering throughout New Zealand made the recreation generally available and encouraged a greater diversity of participation. This was supported by changing attitudes and expectations in society and the growth of mountain clubs. Activity began before clubs were formed, but by the mid-1920s their existence was assuming greater importance and this continued to increase. Initially the recreational focus for all groups was on adjacent hills or mountains. These were accessible to beginners or trampers with no previous alpine experience as well as to people with limited leisure time. Aucklanders looked to the Waitakare ranges,<sup>14</sup> but Wellingtonians had more potential for a variety of mountain experience in the nearby Rimutaka and Tararua ranges.<sup>15</sup> People in Christchurch and Dunedin often began with local walks. However, as the nearby became known and experience was gained, there was more challenge to be found further afield and, in spite of the

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<sup>13</sup> Greig p83-5,89,96-7 and see also early volumes of *CM* 1932-6. J Phillips "The Hard Man" *A Man's Country?* p81-130, though focusing on rugby, provides useful background.

<sup>14</sup> Highest point 1500ft.

<sup>15</sup> A considerable area with a number of points over 5000ft.

travel often needed,<sup>16</sup> by 1930 investigation of a great variety of mountain country was well under way. Mountaineering for general exploration was then often followed by focus on smaller and smaller areas and on individual peaks.

In the North Island there were many ranges suitable for tramping. Mt Egmont, Tongariro National Park, and the Ruahine and Tararua ranges could also provide more varied mountain experience in different seasons and weather conditions. Tramping and climbing possibilities were greater in the South Island, with ranges stretching the length of the island from north-west Nelson and the Kaikoura ranges through the central Southern Alps to Fiordland, Southland and Otago. The tremendous diversity of the mountains provided scope for a range of tramping and climbing which could suit all abilities and ambitions. Christchurch proved to have the most accessible mountains in the Waimakariri river headwaters but from 1930 the young Canterbury mountaineers found exciting fields for exploration and climbing in the headwaters of other Canterbury valleys, such as the Rakaia and the Rangitata. Unclimbed peaks also led to mountaineering in the lesser known valleys of Westland. Valleys and peaks near the Mt Cook region but not part of it, such as the Godley glacier and Lake Ohau headwaters, were more thoroughly explored and climbed in the 1930s. The Otago alps and parts of Fiordland, between Lakes Wanaka and Wakatipu and the West Coast, became increasingly popular after the First World War for tramping and climbing, some of it on well known routes, but much of it exploratory. In the north of the South Island mountaineering was found in the Nelson Lakes area, and in the Kaikoura ranges, though recreational development was slower there.

The high peaks were in the South Island, but in summer and winter many of the lower ranges in both islands provided alpine conditions which were challenging in their own right. The known or obvious valleys and peaks tended to be thoroughly exploited first for tramping and climbing, but both

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<sup>16</sup> People from Auckland, increasingly the most populous city, had to travel 200 miles (320 km) to Tongariro National Park to reach alpine conditions.

consequentially and simultaneously there was a search for novelty elsewhere. First ascents were a considerable attraction, but as they became less possible because there was so much successful climbing, new routes and traverses became major aims. Guided climbers had tended to focus on the very high peaks in the restricted Mt Cook area, so there were still many peaks between 7000 and 9000ft to be climbed in ranges elsewhere. These were often tackled by the new young independent climbers, though some were also achieved by guided climbers seeking challenge in more remote areas. But first ascents and pioneering exploration were not essential for many mountaineers to whom novelty was personal. Their aim was to tramp or climb in areas they had not previously visited. No matter how often a peak, like Ruapehu or Hochstetter Dome, had been climbed, it could still be an exciting adventure for someone doing it for the first time. So while there was a search for the new and the unclimbed, generations of climbers also repeated the feats of their predecessors, with reduced uncertainty of the unknown perhaps, but a similar degree of enjoyment.

Many ranges and mountains throughout New Zealand provided a dual purpose and opportunity to mountaineers. There were possibilities of tramping, exploration and climbing achievement everywhere, but places like Mts Egmont and Ruapehu, the Tararua ranges, and the Arthur's Pass and Lake Wakatipu regions also served as training grounds for more difficult peaks elsewhere. Mountaineers in these areas did not just develop skills and independence but were able to maintain and practise them till, perhaps once a year, they could make a trip to higher ranges. It became recognised by clubs and guides that it was possible to acquire the requisite proficiency in one area and then successfully apply that experience to another more testing mountain region. It was unnecessary to go to the Hermitage or the West Coast glaciers to begin climbing. However, the peaks of the Mt Cook area were an attraction because of their number and height, and because there was already some

tradition associated with them.<sup>17</sup> Though not very acceptable to the commercial interests at the Hermitage, independent guideless climbing had begun in the Mt Cook region by 1924-5,<sup>18</sup> and 1926-7 saw the first successful climbing there by a group who had become experienced mountaineers elsewhere. With no more than Egmont experience, Gordon Mace, Rod Syme and Frank Allan climbed a number of peaks and were only thwarted on Mt Cook by very difficult conditions.<sup>19</sup> Then, and on subsequent visits, such climbers showed that sufficient experience could be gained on lesser mountains and ranges to enable the high peaks to be tackled. They also gave considerable impetus to the move towards independent mountaineering. Their fitness, imagination, self-confidence, careful reconnaissance and hard work showed how climbing might be done in New Zealand.

## OVERSEAS CONNECTIONS

The growth of exploratory independent mountaineering tended to emphasise differences between the recreation in New Zealand and that elsewhere, especially in Europe. Overall there was little external influence on New Zealand mountaineering, yet at the same time there were more links with overseas climbing. There was, of course, some reliance by New Zealand mountaineers on equipment and ideas for instruction from overseas. Towards the end of the interwar period, overseas ways of climbing and mountain ranges also suggested new possibilities to a few New Zealanders. One English climber who did have an impact in New Zealand was H E L Porter who altered technique. However, most of the other visiting climbers left little impression

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<sup>17</sup> Unlike many CMC members Stan Barnett believed: "while other districts may be more attractive to the explorer the Mt Cook district seems without limitation in its possibilities for the mountaineer." - CM 1936 p13

<sup>18</sup> Notably two teenagers, Jack Ross and Tim Fitzherbert, but also others - *Press* 20 February 1925 p9, 4 February 1926 p8; *AJHR* 1925 p7-8; *NZAJ* 1925 p283-6, 1969 p258; Greig p63-4

<sup>19</sup> R Syme Diary; *NZAJ* 1926 (pub 1927) p318-29



other than of personality and achievement with guides.<sup>20</sup> Nor did most New Zealanders who climbed overseas use their experience to alter local climbing patterns. The extent of 'civilisation' in the European mountains and the still frequent use of guides there were regarded with some disdain by many New Zealand mountaineers who saw their own independent activity as more 'manly' and worthy. The development of extreme rock and face climbing in Europe was irrelevant to New Zealand climbing, though by the Second World War merit was being seen in rock climbing as an aspect of mountaineering. A stronger influence came to be the publicity about expeditionary climbing in the Himalaya which supported local exploratory mountaineering and encouraged New Zealanders to look to high peaks overseas.

H E L (Ned) Porter, from England, made a considerable contribution to the development of climbing in New Zealand.<sup>21</sup> Through his attitude and example he extended the limits of the possible, and encouraged others to climb more imaginatively. In 1926-27 he showed what might be achieved independent of guides on the very highest peaks. In practical terms, Porter's re-introduction of crampons to New Zealand climbing was his most significant impact. They increased the speed, and often the safety, of climbs, extended perceptions of what might be attempted, and encouraged independent guideless climbing. He brought crampons to New Zealand in 1923-4, only to find that none of the guides he climbed with had ever seen a pair. Step cutting and parties of three or more were still the norm,<sup>22</sup> but from his climbing in England and Europe, some of it guideless, Porter was aware there could be another approach. In the 1926-7 season he deliberately climbed with a Swiss friend, Marcel Kurz, to free himself from the restrictions of the Hermitage guiding system and to

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<sup>20</sup> Some achieved little - *NZ Herald* 21 December 1922; *NZAJ* 1922 p163-4; *Press* 17 February 1923 p6; *AJHR* 1924 p6-7. Some publicised climbing. Julian Grande also drew attention to the earlier climbing of his wife, the New Zealander Constance Barnicoat - *Press* 3,9,27 March 1923 p12,6,11. English climbers such as Katie Gardiner and Ida Corry showed great courage and determination - *NZAJ* 1933 p207-17, 1934 p289-94, 1978 p109-14

<sup>21</sup> Major sources: *AJHR* H-2 1924-36, *NZAJ* 1923-37, 1969 p254-62, 1977 p131-5

<sup>22</sup> *AJHR* 1924 p7; *NZAJ* 1969 p256-61

demonstrate an alternative style. In a series of first-rate climbs, the guideless pair showed the virtues of two on the rope<sup>23</sup> and of crampons. They set a fine example of fast, ambitious, but safe independent climbing.<sup>24</sup> This led to something of a revolution in New Zealand climbing. Guides and climbers alike immediately found crampons acceptable and useful,<sup>25</sup> though it was years before most had them and some caution was expressed about their use.<sup>26</sup> There was always doubt about whether self-sufficient New Zealand mountaineers needed to use 'artificial aids', but after Porter this phrase no longer applied to crampons.

Porter's climbing made sense to young New Zealanders. However, the extent of his influence was somewhat surprising since in many ways he was a relatively conservative climber,<sup>27</sup> and quite unlike the type of independent mountaineer which was developing in New Zealand. He was affluent, and so could wait for good weather, and since he did not like carrying a heavy pack, he often used guides. He also focused on climbing without tramping or exploration, and thus remained outside the emerging mainstream of exploratory mountaineering. However, other factors made him acceptable to a variety of New Zealand mountaineers. Though he was from overseas, he was British and he married a

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<sup>23</sup> Porter also showed this with guide Frank Milne on Mt Sefton 4 February 1925.

<sup>24</sup> Extracts from the Haast Hut Book 7 & 28 January 1927 CMA; NZAJ 1926 (pub 1927) p297-302, 1969 p259-62; AJHR H-2 1927 p7-8

<sup>25</sup> M Byles *By Cargo Boat and Mountain* London 1931 p267; NZAJ 1928 p48, 1977 p133 citing Porter 1929

<sup>26</sup> NZAJ 1933 p268-9 (also a little advice about crampon use p272), 1937 p130; CM 1975 p15; Harrowfield p4-5,12

<sup>27</sup> Apart from 1926-7, he seldom climbed without guides. First ascents appealed to him (Beckett p29 citing AJ 1924) but he did not seek the summits at all costs - NZAJ 1937 p39-40. He chose to turn back near the summit of Mt Dampier, the only recognised 10,000ft peak which he had not climbed.

New Zealander. In a series of visits between 1923 and 1936 he showed his liking for the country and its mountains.<sup>28</sup> More importantly, he was friendly and helpful to other climbers, sharing his knowledge, enjoyment and positive attitude. He demonstrated a high climbing style and achievement which could be imitated. By extending the range of climbing possibilities he encouraged what was already beginning to occur.<sup>29</sup> Coincidentally, the Mt Egmont climbers Mace, Syme and Allan began high independent climbing in the 1926-27 season, and they too had chosen to use crampons.<sup>30</sup>

Imported equipment and literature had more impact than all individual visitors except Porter. There was enough variety in imports of ice axes, alpine rope, crampons and small cooking stoves, to suit New Zealand conditions, though tents, packs and parkas were sometimes altered or manufactured locally.<sup>31</sup> Modification of overseas items and practices took time as there was a tendency to accept the British view, in particular, as authoritative. A specific and important British influence on the development of climbing in New Zealand was a manual for climbing, *Mountain Craft* by Geoffrey Winthrop Young, which was published in 1920. The book was reviewed favourably in the *NZAJ* 1921 and since there was nothing like it in New Zealand and much of it was relevant to local conditions and climbing, it remained important through several reprints and a revised edition in 1945.<sup>32</sup> An instruction manual like this made the techniques of using rope and ice axe available to anyone, not just to guides.

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<sup>28</sup> He was influenced to come to New Zealand in late 1923 by Sam Turner's account of his traverse of Mt Cook in 1906 - *NZAJ* 1969 p255; RNZSA D3863. He married a New Zealand climber, Doris Barker.

<sup>29</sup> letter from Frank Simmons 8 July 1968 NZAC Arch; *NZAJ* 1977 p132-4

<sup>30</sup> Letters G Mace to R Syme (late 1926) R Syme PP; R Syme Diary December 1926 - January 1927; *NZAJ* 1926 (pub 1927) p318-329

<sup>31</sup> *NZAJ* adverts 1921, 1934-40; *NZAJ* 1968 p460; Harrowfield p4-5; PC Rod Syme 10 April 1994. Karabiners and pitons were also brought to New Zealand at the end of the interwar period.

<sup>32</sup> *NZAJ* 1921 p108-110, 1940 p216; CM 1938 p75, 1939 p84; Pascoe *Unclimbed* p209; *Mountain Craft* London 1949; letter Frank Simmons 8 July 1968 NZAC Arch; Forbes & McNab p13; PC Andy Anderson 11 January 1994; PC Jim Gilkison 19 January 1994

However, the ways of climbing expounded in it were for some years imitated rather than used as starting points for the development of mountaineering appropriate to local conditions.<sup>33</sup>

In comparison to the combined influence of Porter, crampons and *Mountain Craft*, New Zealanders who climbed overseas in the interwar period did little to modify climbing in their homeland. However, their perceptions did contribute to the growth of New Zealand national feeling. All New Zealanders who climbed in Europe were struck by the comparative lack of 'civilisation' in their own mountains. This was interpreted as meaning that New Zealand mountaineering was superior because it was more 'natural', more independent of the organised and industrialised urban world. It was acknowledged that more difficult climbs were made, but most New Zealanders in Europe agreed that the climbing there seemed artificial. The natural environment in New Zealand, with its possibilities for new exploration and ascents, was thought to develop a more all-round 'man'. At the same time, a few New Zealanders, who usually climbed with guides, liked the way transport, tracks, huts and other accommodation enabled a person to focus solely on climbing without the pack-carrying of exploratory mountaineering.<sup>34</sup>

Doubt about 'foreign' climbing being applicable to the New Zealand situation was supported by W G 'Monty' McClymont of Dunedin, a teacher, historian and All Black. Most of his climbing in New Zealand was without guides and he did the same when he had the opportunity to climb in Britain and the European Alps in 1936. After that experience he made it clear that he did not wish to see some of the European practices emulated in New Zealand. He

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<sup>33</sup> By the late 1930s there were modifications of practice - Pascoe *Unclimbed* p209ff, and see below

<sup>34</sup> George Mannering (NZAJ 1922 p164; Mannering *Eighty Years* p102-35); Margaret Lorimer (*Press* 16 January 1924 p2; L Voller *Sentinel at the Gates* Nelson 1982 p78-9); Hugh Chambers (NZAJ 1953 p298, 1969 p258); Dora de Beer & Ethel Theomin (NZAJ 1936 p300-10); S Russell *Mountain Prospect* London 1946 p89-90, 93-4

enjoyed the specific emphasis on rock climbing but severe European climbing using "mechanical aids" such as pitons he found a "curiosity". It is clear from his understated writing that he did not agree with the practices of the "Munich school" which at this time was seeking to climb extreme rock and mountain faces and seemed to court danger. Such a view was similar to British attitudes towards this style of climbing. However, McClymont came from an independent position. His experience strengthened the value of guideless climbing and confirmed the exploratory mountaineering in New Zealand. At this time extreme practices in Europe had little relevance in New Zealand which, in contrast, offered exploration and easier first ascents, often through snow and ice climbing.<sup>35</sup>

In contrast to 'extreme' European climbing, Himalayan mountaineering came to be significant to New Zealand climbers in the 1930s.<sup>36</sup> World climbing was led not just by rock and face climbing, but also by Himalayan expeditions which were well publicised in many accounts.<sup>37</sup> The British seemed to be leading the way in the Himalaya and the very high peaks began to appeal to New Zealanders as the ultimate climbing challenge. L V 'Dan' Bryant, a teacher and independent mountaineer, climbed guideless in Europe in 1934, achieving a double traverse of the Matterhorn among other ascents. His feats were sufficient for him to be selected for the 1935 British Mt Everest Reconnaissance Expedition. While he seemed not to acclimatise properly to the higher altitudes, he did show his leader Eric Shipton the capabilities of New Zealand climbers at

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<sup>35</sup> NZAJ 1933 p269-70, 1934 p477, 1937 p78-88, 1944 p153-7; R L G Irving *The Romance of Mountaineering* London 1935 p119-46; C F Meade *Approach to the Hills* London 1948 p29,51-102; W Unsworth *North Face* London 1969 passim; Engel *Mountaineering in the Alps* p217-37

<sup>36</sup> As early as 1915 Freda Du Faur had thought of climbing in the Himalayas. Sam Turner and the guide Frank Alack hoped to join Everest expeditions in the 1920s and 1930s - Du Faur p208; *Press* 2 April 1921 p7; F Alack *Share My Joys* Palmerston North 1974 p21,206

<sup>37</sup> Summaries of expeditions and book reviews in NZAJ 1921 p102, 1922 p159-61,165, 1933 p260-5, 1934 p457-67, 1935 p190, 1936 p333-52,397,399-400, 1938 p319-22; CM 1938 p108-11, 1939 p116-19

route-finding, pack-carrying, snow and ice climbing, and hard work on an expedition. The abilities needed in the Himalaya seemed to be the same as for New Zealand, so Bryant's experience reinforced the validity of exploratory climbing. His example was an important legacy for the post-Second World War period, but, more immediately, his participation in this expedition broadened the objectives of ambitious New Zealand climbers in the later 1930s.<sup>38</sup>

With this example, and the continued acquisition of experience in New Zealand, it became natural for some climbers to look to challenges overseas. In 1938 came the first overseas climbing expedition, led by Marie Byles of Sydney, who climbed in New Zealand. She, Marjorie Edgar Jones and Dora de Beer employed two New Zealand guides, Mick Bowie and Kurt Suter, to lead their climbing on the Sansato Massif in south-western China where the peaks reached 20,000ft.<sup>39</sup> Although this party was not very successful from a personal or climbing point of view, it did receive considerable publicity. The CMC too was looking further afield for mountain challenges by 1938. However, the Second World War prevented their ambitious first expedition planned for 1940. The intention was to attempt Kangchenjunga (28,146ft), the third highest mountain in the world on the Nepal-Sikkim border in the Himalaya. This peak had resisted the efforts of several European expeditions.<sup>40</sup>

There were other possibilities for New Zealand climbing by the later 1930s, though their greatest impact came much later than that of Himalayan climbing. As early as the end of 1927 the British Cabinet Minister, the Rt Hon L S Amery,

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<sup>38</sup> NZAJ 1935 p103-11, 1936 p333-52, 1958 p452-3, 1969 p265; L V Bryant *New Zealanders and Everest* Wellington 1953. Bryant also climbed in Canada and Britain in 1938.

<sup>39</sup> Byles PP Mitchell; *Press* 4 March 1939; NZAJ 1939 p18-28; N Bowie *Mick Bowie The Hermitage Years* Wellington 1969 p78-81; D de Beer *Yunnan* 1938 1971. Dora de Beer then lived in England but came from Dunedin and had first climbed in New Zealand. The party also included the Australian Fraser Radcliffe who had briefly belonged to the CMC - CM 1937 p138, 1938 p97

<sup>40</sup> CM 1956 p5, 1975 p141-3; S Styles *On Top of the World* London 1967 p238-40; Burrell p27-8; M Mahoney *Harry Ayres: Mountain Guide* Christchurch 1982 p69-71

while in New Zealand as part of a tour to encourage imperial connections, took the opportunity to climb and ski. He suggested the high snowfields were "absolutely ideal country for ski mountaineering".<sup>41</sup> With the development of skiing as a sport there was some ski-touring and climbing in winter.<sup>42</sup> After the visit of the experienced British ski-mountaineer Colin Wyatt in 1936<sup>43</sup> more specific thought was given to this new combination sport which could remove much of the laborious snowfield plodding from climbing, but war ended any possibility of immediate progress.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, basic rock climbing was developing in the 1930s, mainly to improve fitness and skills for the peaks. In Britain and Europe rock climbing was the basis of alpine climbing, in contrast to the tramping and exploration which underlay mountain ascents in New Zealand. David Hall, a teacher and writer, who had begun his climbing while at Cambridge University, wrote about rock climbing in New Zealand as early as 1931.<sup>45</sup> He had experienced the value of using local rock to hone skills, and others too began to use rock outcrops in places like the Port Hills near Christchurch. By the end of the 1930s rock climbing was important not just for fitness but also as essential practising of rope and belaying technique.<sup>46</sup> However the war, and later focus on the Himalaya and the Antarctica, were to delay the development of rock climbing in New Zealand as both a basis for mountain climbing and as a recreation in its own right.

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<sup>41</sup> AJHR H-2 1928 p9; NZAJ 1928 p37-42; L S Amery *In the Rain and the Sun* London 1946 p145,149-54; Harper *Memories* p153-7. Amery was an experienced alpinist

<sup>42</sup> NZAJ 1935 p149-50, 1936 p357, 1937 p89-90

<sup>43</sup> AJHR H-2 1937 p15; NZAJ 1937 p89-91; C Wyatt *The Call of the Mountains* London 1952 p49-68; Bowie p48-54

<sup>44</sup> There was an attempt to form a ski mountaineering section of the NZAC in 1939 - NZAJ 1939 p100-5, 1940 p212-5

<sup>45</sup> *Press* 28 March 1931 p11; NZAJ 1972 p117-8

<sup>46</sup> CM 1939 p87; NZAJ 1940 p217. Latter based on notes made from *Mountain Craft*.

## NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAINEERING CULTURE

In spite of the possibilities suggested by overseas connections, tramping remained the basis of New Zealand mountaineering, and by the mid-1930s a distinctive style of climbing had developed which was a source of pride to many involved. The climbing was club-based exploratory and expeditionary mountaineering. This evolved through the inclusion of summits in the aims of the trampers and exploratory mountaineers.<sup>47</sup> A key feature was the independence and freedom which was sought. The activity was dominated by men for the opportunities offered by mountain recreation were much more available to them than women, but the latter too could achieve considerable autonomy in the mountains. Independence from the guides who had dominated climbing for more than twenty years was essential to most of the new mountaineers. There were not enough guides for them to be involved in local mountaineering throughout New Zealand,<sup>48</sup> but there was also a philosophical determination that no matter how helpful and useful guides were, climbing without them was of greater value.<sup>49</sup> There were other freedoms to be gained in the mountains as well. While older mountaineers might be mentors, and were usually authority figures in the clubs, in the mountains groups of young trampers and climbers had considerable independent choice of action which they found stimulating. The contrast with the apparently more circumscribed and organised urban life of work or study, and with 'civilised' overseas climbing, also made New Zealand mountaineering seem unconfined and unrestricted.

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<sup>47</sup> Many aspects of this mountaineering were outlined by Jock Sim 1933, cited in Pascoe *Unclimbed* p225.

<sup>48</sup> Apart from guides in the Mt Cook region, they were only to be found at Arthur's Pass, where Oscar Coberger was established from 1929, and there was other casual guiding, notably by Otira engine-driver W D (Woll) Frazer and policeman Will Calwell in the 1920s, and Betsy Blunden and Rosamond Harper in 1934 - *NZAJ* 1983 p188-9; PC Felix Harvey 20 February 1992; PC Andy Anderson 11 January 1994; PC Doug Frazer 15 January 1994; PC Betsy Anderson 16 January 1994

<sup>49</sup> *Press* 14 November 1931 p14 (The author of the article "Climbers and Guides A Plea for the Amateur" was John Pascoe - BWI); *Press* 13 January 1934 p10



New Zealand mountaineering was noticeably different from climbing elsewhere, not least because of the variety of skills and the hard physical labour of pack-carrying which were required for independence, discovery and achievement. It was the virtually untouched nature of the mountains and ranges, and the pioneering skills required for successful tramping and climbing, which appealed to so many mountaineers. They sought increasing difficulty and challenge, but were essentially practical in the ways they went about their recreation. Indeed, a wide-ranging practicality was one of the main features of the independence of New Zealand mountaineers from the later 1920s. This began to incorporate the mountaineers in the pioneering ethos of their country. Versatile skills which gave self-sufficiency had always been a feature of Pakeha exploration and settlement, and now the young mountaineers, in their recreation, demonstrated the continued existence of such abilities which could be admired by the wider society. They needed skill in exploration, bush travel and river crossing, as well as in snow and rock climbing. If they wished to survive in their chosen recreation, mountaineers had to be practical, and they were, often in a down-to-earth, do-it-yourself way. Within climbing, these attributes separated independent mountaineers from guided climbers, and made links to the pioneers of the 1880s and 1890s. Two of them who were still alive and active, George Mannering and AP Harper, became significant patrons of the new mountaineering.

One very practical concern of independent mountaineers was with the necessary material aspects such as clothing, equipment and food. Time and effort went into working out what was best in New Zealand, whether from overseas, locally manufactured, or home-made. Check-lists were established of everything that might be needed for different mountain situations, both to ensure safety, and to keep weights carried as low as possible. There could be as many views on what was best as there were mountaineers, and variety, discussion and even difference of opinion ensured substantial progress in equipping mountaineers. Preparation could involve experimentation in the mountains, but it consumed much more time in town, helping to maintain the

recreational focus. The mountaineers adopted items which were useful, such as crampons, and windproof, waterproof parkas made of japara,<sup>50</sup> though often they modified the clothing, tents and packs used, to better suit their activity. Improvements in equipment and clothing enabled climbers to cope with more difficult conditions and allowed for greater independence and ambition. Food for the mountains was an endless source of debate, as there were so many possibilities for the best balance of calorific value, weight and personal taste. In the early 1930s poverty sometimes restricted diet, and there was also ignorance of the types and quantities of food needed for energetic physical activity,<sup>51</sup> but individual and group effort helped work out satisfactory compromises.<sup>52</sup>

The practicality of the New Zealand style of climbing also manifested itself in personal and group development, and the number of people climbing in the 1930s was sufficient to create an ethos which could maintain itself in the face of opposition. Mountaineers worked very seriously to establish and maintain physical fitness, realising that it led to safer climbing, and would sometimes make up for lack of skill and knowledge. It could also substantially increase the mountaineering possibilities, in terms of both perception and actual achievement. Many people tramped and climbed so frequently that their physical prowess was maintained at a high level all year round. If that was not possible then running, walking and rock climbing could be substitutes. Though physical fitness was very important to mountaineers, they did not neglect more specific skills, and techniques for rope-work, ice axe and crampon use, and river crossings were learned and practised by club groups, both in and out of the mountains. The personal development usually occurred in a group context

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<sup>50</sup> A close weave cotton, used 'dry' for tents and oiled for parkas.

<sup>51</sup> Andy Anderson and companions took "a hell of a lot of rice" and "a hell of a lot of beans" - Harrowfield p12-13. It was common for Erskine Bowmar and friends to lose "at least a stone in weight on a trip" - Malloch p35. In the Tararuas rice, raisins, milk powder and a bit of bacon was a common diet - PC John Read 5 April 1994

<sup>52</sup> *Press* 14 September 1932 p11; *NZAJ* 1934 "Mountaineering Rations" p337-44; *CM* 1938 p71-8, 1939 p88-9; Pascoe *Unclimbed* p214; W S Gilkison PP NZAC Arch. Greta Stevenson used the facilities of the family company Irvine & Stevenson to try making pemmican in the early 1930s and the firm produced it commercially - *NZAJ* 1934 advert; PC Alister Duthie 28 January 1994

in New Zealand. The clubs were important, and out of them small bands of like-minded friends and companions emerged to become the leading edge of mountaineering. Solo tramping or climbing was still frowned on because of its inherent danger,<sup>53</sup> but it was uncommon anyway, mainly because there were so many more mountaineers available as companions. Furthermore the challenges and achievements sought usually demanded a strong team with a variety of experience and expertise. As in urban team sport, the ideal was for the individual to become the servant of the group for the advantage of all.<sup>54</sup>

Some activities which were for the benefit of mountaineering also brought the 'civilised' and the mountain worlds closer together, in similar fashion to earlier pioneers. Sometimes trampers and climbers deliberately encouraged this conjunction to persuade non-mountaineers that the recreation was valid. Map-making continued for years, to record what was known, and to improve route-finding and identification of objectives. Once maps were produced they brought entry into the mountains within the reach of many more people. The initial purpose of photographs of routes and mountains, and writing about mountaineering, was also to benefit the recreation, but this recording soon made the mountain region more familiar to the wider community. Another aspect of the self-help process was seen in the erection of huts throughout the mountains. Huts were focal points for shared effort, then centres for climbing and social activity. Everything for these huts had to be carried in on the backs of mountaineers or horses and the existence of huts committed clubs to a continuing effort in maintenance.<sup>55</sup> But such permanent shelter improved access and was a significant intrusion of man-made structures. To the mountaineers,

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<sup>53</sup> Byles *By Cargo Boat* p307-8; NZAJ 1932 p8, 1936 p376; CM 1975 p82; Harrowfield p6-9,13; D Butler *The Barefoot Bush Walker* Sydney 1991 p81

<sup>54</sup> CM 1937 p119; Pascoe *Unclimbed* p209

<sup>55</sup> NZAJ 1930-40 passim; CM 1932-40, 1975 passim; Greig p18-21; Scanlan *Egmont Story* p106; Kerr p17-23; Maclean p135-76 passim

maps, photographs, records and huts were signs that they and their clubs were making major progress. However, in all these ways they also began more significant human modification of the natural environment.

One characteristic strand of do-it-yourself mountaineering was a confidence, even a conviction, that because they were so prepared, tough and adaptable, the mountaineers could, sooner or later, go anywhere and climb anything.<sup>56</sup> Efforts to instil safe climbing practices were offset by the fact that one of the main attractions of the recreation was freedom from restraints, other than those imposed by self and party. Survival was a primary aim but there was acceptance of risk-taking. Confidence came from group and individual expertise, and from an intensity in many young climbers as, for a few years, they focused their lives on the mountains.<sup>57</sup> Their achievements were considerable and rightly a source of pride. Belief in their own abilities was shown in the greater length and difficulty of both the climbing and the transalpine routes they attempted. Confidence could become a possessiveness towards certain mountains, and a brashness of personality, self-centred and intolerant of other climbers and non-climbers. Sometimes the energy and enthusiasm with which climbing was pursued out-ran experience and safety, and fitness was at times a substitute for care and good technique. From 1930 there were more nights out on climbs and more accidents and deaths in the mountains, and perhaps knowledge and skills were not keeping up with ambitions. However, until the later 1930s, most deaths in the mountains did not occur while actually climbing, and nights out were at times a sign of the confidence of a party.<sup>58</sup> Among some mountaineers there was almost an air of indestructibility which was only modified when there were more fatal climbing accidents after 1935.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> NZAJ 1937 p140

<sup>57</sup> PC Andy Anderson 11 January 1994; PC Russell Edwards 19 January 1994

<sup>58</sup> NZAJ 1930-40, especially accident reports. 15 deaths listed for 1930s in NZAJ 1943 p2-3, but this number does not include those on North Island mountains.

<sup>59</sup> NZAJ 1936 p384-6, 1937 p130-2,137-8,311, 1938 p300-11; PC Russell Edwards 19 January 1994. The deaths of three Otago climbers on Mt Trent 27 March 1937, and of

The natural environment in New Zealand, rough, difficult, and little touched by human development, was central to exploratory mountaineering. In all the activity of the 1930s there was a substantial element of struggle with the various features of the natural world and a searching for some degree of conquest through successful journeying, including to the summits. First ascents and explorations were certainly valued by practical mountaineers whose intention was to discover the whole landscape, for themselves rather than for society. But the mountains provided more than just conquest for those who ventured into them. Enjoyment could be gained from every facet of mountaineering and its setting, especially from acquisition of the basic pioneering skills of living and exploring in the mountains.<sup>60</sup> The combination of physical and mental challenge could be exhilarating. Independent climbers showed much more clearly than guided ones that theirs was a leisure-time pursuit. It was laborious but it was not work since the activity was for self, not for pay or for the benefit of society. Climbers saw the mountains as a normal place for recreation and only sometimes worried if the public did not agree. With the pleasure to be gained in the mountains came refreshment. This resulted not just from the 'sport', but from being in a more natural and healthy environment than the towns and cities in which most trampers and climbers lived. At a time of difficulty and change in the wider world of the 1930s, the mountains, and the rivers and bush at their feet, offered the inspiration of an apparently unchanging Nature. In 1928 Eric Miller expressed his appreciation of both the setting and the recreation, in a tone which was to be echoed time and again in the years following:

For many the end of the road marks the limit of travel in comfort, and there might seem to be no gain in venturing further. Yet the few who have gone on have found a path leading to health and vigour in a land of strange enchantment.<sup>61</sup>

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Norman Dowling on Mt Evans 31 December 1937, were especially significant because they affected two of the most active groups of climbers, in Otago and Canterbury.

<sup>60</sup> See for example: Gilkison *Peaks, Packs* p113-5

<sup>61</sup> NZAJ 1928 p13. Other examples cited in Pascoe *Unclimbed* p192-5

There was no doubt in the minds of mountaineers and others close to them than their recreation developed manly qualities in its adherents.<sup>62</sup> The physical health created by tramping and climbing was significant but that was just the basis for mental and even spiritual fitness for life in the wider society.

Mountaineering was a testing process which encouraged individual strength and development of character. Indeed, the shadow of danger in the mountains highlighted the best qualities in human nature. The infinite possibilities in the mountains for achievement and fellowship created a situation not just of never-ending ambitions, but of lifelong discovery and learning, whether about self and abilities, or about other people and one's native country. The manly qualities developed in mountaineering were perceived to be those of New Zealand's pioneers, soldiers<sup>63</sup> and sportsmen. Mountaineering was for participants not for spectators and the many skills required for independence in the mountains were to be admired and imitated. The personal attributes of mountaineers such as courage, physical and mental toughness, adaptability and endurance were desired for all New Zealanders. However, climbers were also well aware of the significance of teamwork in their recreation, for life and death might depend on the co-operation and combination of individuals. This made partnership in mountain recreation more important than in most sports.<sup>64</sup> The organisation, teamwork and egalitarianism of clubs and parties in the mountains seemed a model for New Zealand, and mountaineering began to find a more secure place in the New Zealand psyche and society.

The most significant social aspect of the new exploratory mountaineering was the growth of strong bonding between participants. When climbing had been a 'gentlemen's' sport such close relationships had not seemed possible because of

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<sup>62</sup> NZAJ 1937 p139, 1938 p318

<sup>63</sup> In the Second World War deliberate and specific connections were made between the qualities needed by mountaineers and soldiers - NZAJ 1941 p100-1, 1943 p81-4

<sup>64</sup> This included Search and Rescue which was first organised by mountain clubs, then by co-operation between clubs, Federated Mountain Clubs, and Police - NZAJ 1936 p373, 1937 p167; Maclean p155-163

class and social restraints.<sup>65</sup> In the more egalitarian New Zealand mountain world from the later 1920s there developed what is often termed male mateship. In mountaineering this grew out of the commanding majority of men in mountaineering and the importance to them of their frequent physical activity together. There were close relationships among groups of active women in the Tararua Tramping Club, and the obituaries for Saidee Barnett, killed while rock climbing in 1940, suggest that companionship of a similar sort could occur between mountain men and women.<sup>66</sup> However, men dominated mountaineering, and it was the creation of both a general male fraternity, and of smaller tightknit groups which characterised the recreation. Central to the development of mateship among mountaineers was a focus on the practical expression of a common physical culture. For the first time, mountaineering took on the pattern which was so common in team sports such as rugby, and among troops in wartime.

Teamwork and partnership were essential for mountaineers who explored the valleys and ranges, and climbed the peaks, for unlike guides and client climbers they climbed as equals. Often the members of a climbing party were similar, but any differences of age, ability and experience were less important than personality and common enthusiasm.<sup>67</sup> It was accepted that coping with difficulties created desirable qualities, and one of those most highly rated was the ability to be a good companion, in all circumstances.<sup>68</sup> In the overcoming of obstacles mountaineers were subjected to considerable stress and sometimes they faced great danger. In similar fashion to soldiers in war they were forced to rely on each other, and they usually felt a strong sense of responsibility

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<sup>65</sup> Such mateship did not develop in English climbing till groups of working-class rock climbers emerged after the Second World War.

<sup>66</sup> CM 1940 p84; NZAJ 1941 p100-1. Both obituaries, written by different male climbers, referred to her as "a gallant companion". Bonding of a different sort occurred in mountain clubs as well - there were many marriages.

<sup>67</sup> Compare Eric Miller's comment on a trip led by the egotistical Sam Turner (NZAJ 1928 p43) with his view of a climb of Mt Aspiring which he made with friends (NZAJ 1928 p5).

<sup>68</sup> NZAJ 1938 p318; PC Andy Anderson 11 January 1994

towards each other. They coped as a team, and the process developed not just satisfaction at a personal and group level, but respect and liking for each other to the point where strong ties developed. Trips which were difficult created trust and an emotional bond which could be lifelong. Although shared adversity was crucial in the creation of close relationships, good companionship also came from any common purpose and activity. Enjoyment in life was provided not just by successful expeditions, but by the congenial company of others with common interests, both in and out of the mountains. In town these men maintained their close relationships by socialising together, reviewing past trips and preparing for future ones. Friendly rivalry was enjoyed within climbing parties, as well as between them. Competition led to greater achievements, but it also confirmed the bonds and strengths of groups.

The relationship between mountaineers, as between most New Zealand men, was usually kept on a practical, matter-of-fact level. Emphasis was on doing things as a group, but close friendships were greatly valued. Like war and other extreme situations, difficult mountain trips stripped people to their essence. Mountaineers saw each other at their worst, in discomforts and dangers, and at their best, in thrills and joys. A relationship which survived that variety of experience was likely to have considerable depth. However, the intensity of emotion which might exist behind the laconic male front was only occasionally hinted at, usually in obituaries where it was legitimate for men to show some feelings. Often friendship was the highest commendation which could be given to a fellow mountaineer,<sup>69</sup> though the writer of one obituary felt he had lost not merely a friend, but "rather...one's kith and kin".<sup>70</sup> More usually mountaineers expressed their regard for each other through humour and a continued willingness to do things together. They also sometimes rejected outsiders, perhaps women or members of other clubs, who seemed to threaten the solidarity of the group. Relationships men felt comfortable with were an integral part of their distinctive style of climbing.

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<sup>69</sup> NZAJ 1937 p141,143

<sup>70</sup> CM 1937 p119



However, for women mountaineers the situation was not nearly so clear cut. The development of a new, specifically male, culture in mountaineering combined with attitudes and expectations in society to restrict the part women could play in the recreation. Once 'hard' tramping became the normal way for independent mountaineers to begin climbing, it became difficult for women to show they had the desire and skills for climbing. Yet at the same time there was a general acceptance of the natural world and a desire for healthier living. The tramping basis for most mountain recreation and the services provided by mountain clubs encouraged women to participate and helped to include them.<sup>71</sup> The result was something of a paradoxical situation for women wherein they had a chance of inclusion, but were likely to be excluded by a strong male fraternity.

There was always a tension over this gender issue because the mountaineering clubs wished to include women, and did so, but they were controlled by men who did not always want to accept the opposite sex as climbers. Yet, in spite of these difficulties and the attitudes of society, most encouragement for women's mountaineering came from the clubs. All of them originally accepted female members, in spite of some debate about their suitability for tramping or climbing. Even the CMC, later so notorious for refusing to allow women members, decided initially to conform and have open membership.<sup>72</sup> Some groups such as the Victoria University College TC, made particular efforts to encourage women.<sup>73</sup> The services a club supplied to its members were generally accessible to all who wished to be involved. Companionship, which might include male leadership and female chaperonage, was an essential provided for women. The body of knowledge and experience acquired by the group could help all beginners, but the expectations of dependence both of and for women made it most helpful to them. Advice was available on food and

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<sup>71</sup> Photos and accounts suggest that women might be up to 50% of the participants on some day trips in the 1920s - Greig between p32-3; Forbes & McNab p12-3,15

<sup>72</sup> *NZ Life* 30 September, 16 December 1925 CMC Records CMA; Greig p68,70

<sup>73</sup> Greig p70,101; Maclean p163; PC John Read 4 October 1993

clothing, and instruction given on how to deal with difficulties in the hills and mountains. Clubs facilitated participation by providing equipment, accommodation, access to tramping areas, practical leadership and organisation in town and in the mountains. The informality of trips and social functions drew newcomers into the organised bodies which themselves created a sense of belonging and security. They also, through their older urban leadership, presented to the public a formality of responsible mountaineering which was suitable even for daughters.

Society imposed customs of propriety on both men and women mountaineers.<sup>74</sup> By 1920 chaperonage and dress were of little concern to guided women climbers, but their activity was structured, controlled by guides, and often based on huts which had separate rooms for women. Women occasionally climbed with only one guide from the time of Freda Du Faur, but as late as the Second World War this practice could raise eyebrows.<sup>75</sup> Tramping was a new activity in the 1920s and liable to public scrutiny because it was closer to home and it more obviously began and ended in the 'civilised' world. The women involved in tramping and the mountaineering which developed from it were often young, and in the eyes of society their reputations at least were at risk. Men might escape most censure, but the dependent position of women meant social expectations and attitudes had a greater impact on them. Mountain clubs, and a few strong-minded individuals, helped resolve two of the major difficulties which the public imposed on women who wished to take part in hill and mountain recreation. The desire for chaperonage could actually help them, and clubs did much to enable women to wear suitable clothing.

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<sup>74</sup> The most important social mores concerned sexuality, but even men could be pressured by expectations of dress. In 1927 the CMC suggested that a knapsack was useful for men to "secrete a tie and collar", to provide respectability after a trip - *NZ Life* August 1927 CMC Records CMA

<sup>75</sup> Mahoney p67

Some of the first clubs had official or semi-official chaperones on trips,<sup>76</sup> partly to make tramping more respectable. Throughout the interwar period there was usually some degree of informal chaperonage as members of groups looked after each other. In the early days of the Tararua TC, chaperonage did much to enable young women to make their first trips because it satisfied parents. Older or more experienced women could also advise "young things in the matter of equipment, food, and clothing" and either 'mother' or 'monitor' them as need arose. Young men might receive the same treatment as all beginning trampers were taught to do things for themselves and the group, and to be more independent.<sup>77</sup> Formal chaperonage ceased to be a necessity as tramping became established as a valid recreation but there were usually informal concerns about male-female relationships in the mountains. Normal safety precautions demanded more than two people on a trip and potential awkwardness was avoided by large groups. As trips became longer and numbers on them often smaller, women tended to participate in pairs, probably as much for congenial company as for concern about propriety. Usually only the most strong-minded and skilled women mountaineers went on expeditions alone with men, but it was possible in the 1930s.<sup>78</sup>

By contrast, it took time to resolve the differences between public attitudes towards women's clothing and what was actually suitable for female mountaineers. Most women, initially at least, conformed to the expectations of society and went tramping in ordinary though old clothes, but they increasingly proved impractical. Men adopted shorts, boots and lots of wool quite quickly but appropriate clothing for women was not so easily achieved. On simple day trips skirts and ordinary shoes were common, even into the 1930s, but well before then it was discovered in streams and on difficult terrain that feet needed the protection of boots and skirts were unsuitable. Since there

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<sup>76</sup> Greig p69-70; Fuller p11

<sup>77</sup> *Tararua* 1949 p45-6

<sup>78</sup> Greta Stevenson made a first crossing of Clarke Saddle on the Main Divide with Kurt Suter and Alister Duthie - *NZA* 1934 p296-99; PC Alister Duthie 28 January 1994

was parental and societal disapproval of bifurcated clothing for women, it was not immediately clear what would be the best replacement for skirts, and there was pressure on women trampers to wear them in public places throughout the interwar period.<sup>79</sup> In the end it was not just the practical requirements which brought permanent change to women's tramping attire, but the example and leadership of strong individuals, and the group support provided in clubs by women and men. Riding "strides", other longs and then a variety of shorter styles were used. By the mid-1930s, in most clubs, the normal garb for tramping women was a practical blouse or shirt and shorts.<sup>80</sup>

Tramping in clubs introduced increasing numbers of women to the hills and mountains of New Zealand, but it did not necessarily lead them into more difficult mountaineering and climbing. The reasons for this centre round the development of exploratory mountaineering and climbing, often in more remote ranges. As easy tramping developed into mountaineering for many men in the 1920s and 1930s, the recreation became centred round longer and more difficult trips requiring greater fitness and the carrying of heavier packs.<sup>81</sup> This became one significant expression of the activity of the 'hard' men,<sup>82</sup> closely linked to the development of male mateship, especially in the most prominent club of the 1930s, the Canterbury Mountaineering Club. Such mountaineering tended to be just for men though not all men disapproved of women's mountain recreation, and attitudes modified a little towards the end of the 1930s, when the great rush of exploratory mountaineering was tailing off.

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<sup>79</sup> Greig p69-70; *Tararua* 1949 p45-6; Woodham photos p11-16; Forbes & McNab p13; J Gallagher "Playing Like Gentlemen While Behaving Like Ladies" BA Hons Research Essay History Victoria University Wellington 1993 p41-2; Maclean p165

<sup>80</sup> *Auckland Weekly News* 12 January 1938 photo p42; Greig p69-70, photos p80-1; Fuller photo p7; Forbes & McNab photos p12-22,169; Maclean p164-5

<sup>81</sup> Apart from guided climbing there was little climbing without tramping in this period.

<sup>82</sup> Speed was also an expression of 'hard' man activity - Greig p16-7; Maclean p166-7,174

The CMC had excluded women members from 13 September 1927,<sup>83</sup> but it was the only club to do so. Some CMC members climbed with women from time to time throughout the 1930s and by the early 1940s not all agreed with the all-male rule.<sup>84</sup> However, exploratory mountaineering and associated social developments tended to exclude women, reiterating the view that mountaineering was for 'real' men and stressing the male dominance which existed elsewhere. The attitudes of the CMC towards women were the attitudes of society and they were to be found in most mountain clubs, though a few did seek to support women. Mountaineering progress was deemed to lie in more and more difficult trips and climbs, in challenges and feats which many men felt women were not capable of because expectations of women were low.<sup>85</sup> Men were the majority, dominating the clubs and determining the prevailing attitudes, standards and activity. The formation of male 'in-groups' could mean that the services provided by clubs, such as companionship, organisation, leadership, knowledge and instruction were not always available to women.

Clearly delineated concepts of masculinity and femininity, in both society and mountain clubs, were central to the difficulties women faced if they sought to go mountaineering. Men were encouraged from childhood to be physically active but women were not, and so the fitness required for long, difficult trips, and the pack weights to be carried, could be problems for women and limit enjoyment. They began with a lower base level of fitness than men and might lack the upper body strength needed for pack carrying or cutting steps. The

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<sup>83</sup> *NZ Life* October 1927 CMC Records CMA; C E Fenwick. For a time the CMC also excluded women from club records. Jack Mitchell Snr made a second ascent of Mt La Perouse on an expedition organised by Louie Roberts which included Marion Scott and Anne Stevenson. Mitchell acknowledged the leadership of the guide Alec Graham but his account (CM 1931 p51) completely ignored the women, and his longer manuscript (CM 1975 p107-9) hardly mentioned them.

<sup>84</sup> Obituary (Saidee Barnett) by F S Gillett CM 1940 p84; W R Esquilant's explanation of his attempt on the Low Peak of Mt Cook with Australian Dorothy (Dot) English 11 January 1941 CM 1941 p89. He needed no such explanation in *NZAJ* 1941 p84. Esquilant and Butler later climbed the West Peak of Mt Earnslaw - CM 1941 p81, *NZAJ* 1941 p89-90; PC A Anderson 11 January 1994

<sup>85</sup> Men being over-protective of women in the mountains could limit the latter's development of skill and independence - Greig p16,70-1

pressure on women to be 'feminine' and the illusion that women were weak and fragile meant a belief that toughness, strength and muscularity were not for them. Women, of course, could and did acquire the fitness and strength necessary - it was usually just a matter of practice. However, assumptions of male dominance and superiority in physical matters led to the conclusion by most men and women that the latter were not, and could not be as capable as the former in the mountains. Even when women performed as well as men, such as some of those in the Tararau TC by the early 1930s,<sup>86</sup> their ability might still not be quite recognised or accepted.

In the mountains women challenged accepted notions of masculinity and male superiority. Women also suggested that accepted views of femininity and women's roles in society were either invalid or incomplete. Betsy Blunden, the first woman guide at the Hermitage 1928-31, had to act as a hostess in an evening dress after dinner, a role she was not at ease with. During the day, as a guide, some men were not very happy when she led them up mountains.<sup>87</sup> Blunden and other women showed they could be equal with men in the mountains, and also independent of men if they wished. They created alternative views of femininity and women's capabilities which could perhaps be used to legitimise equality for women in other spheres of life. All this was a challenge to men and their male physical culture which was validated by the prowess shown in mountaineering and their supposed superiority. Women's attainment of competence and independence in the mountains threatened this view, and their achievements suggested that mountaineering was not a dangerous or especially 'manly' recreation. The principal male response was to be dismissive of women in the mountains. This was shown in the vocabulary which was used to describe what were thought to be easy climbs. The expressions "an easy day for a lady" and "a hen-cackle" to label straightforward

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<sup>86</sup> Greig p16,69-71

<sup>87</sup> Gallagher p27-8,37-8; PC Betsy Anderson 16 January 1994

climbs showed a patronising attitude towards both the mountains and women.<sup>88</sup> Ignoring women, as the CMC tended to do, or belittling their abilities, reduced them from potential rivalry to a more acceptable inferior role.<sup>89</sup>

Out of the combination of encouragement and limitation for women's mountaineering in clubs and society, emerged some real progress and achievement for women. Only a small number ever did the sort of mountaineering and climbing which might be seen as a threat to men, but there were some, especially in the 1930s, who achieved equality with men or independence from them. Sometimes this resulted from individual circumstance, but more substantial progress came when groups of mountaineering women formed and began to climb both with men and in all-women parties. In small groups women could best demonstrate to themselves that they could carry heavy packs, cover difficult country, do their own leading, and achieve independence. Yet it was sometimes difficult for women climbers to find other women to climb with,<sup>90</sup> and the first to achieve notable independence in the mountains usually climbed with men. Women guides not only gained competence for themselves but learnt a leadership role which was unusual in the mountains. By the mid-1920s Molly and Hilda Haldane, sisters in their twenties, were guiding people up Mt Egmont.<sup>91</sup> Betsy Blunden began on the glaciers near Mt Cook but soon acted as a second guide on climbs. On a 24 hour epic first ascent of Mt Oates near Arthur's Pass on 15 January 1931 she

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<sup>88</sup> CM 1932 p5, 1935 p130; Pascoe *Unclimbed* p33. The attitude shown by such phrases was not, of course, restricted to this period or to New Zealand - Hansen "British Mountaineering" p293

<sup>89</sup> For a fuller discussion of these issues in different place and time see: E Dunning "Sport as a Male Preserve" in Elias & Dunning *Quest for Excitement* Oxford 1986 p267-83; K McCrone *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women 1870-1914* London 1988 p10-18, 240-2, 276-89; Hansen "British Mountaineering" p311-24

<sup>90</sup> PC Betsy Anderson 16 January 1994. She was never a member of a club.

<sup>91</sup> McAlpine p71-2. They lived at North Egmont where their father was caretaker.

showed CMC members, John Pascoe and Brian Barrer, how fit and capable she was. Pascoe knew her ability, but the novice Barrer, with low expectations of a woman climber, was astounded how good she was.<sup>92</sup>

Significant groups of women climbers emerged in Otago and Wellington, and they showed how competent and independent women could be in the mountains. Greta Stevenson, a brilliant botany student at Otago University, was the driving force behind a small group who began with tramping in the mountains of north west Otago.<sup>93</sup> Then on 15 January 1933 she made the first significant all-women climb, of the East Peak of Mt Earnslaw, with Lella Davidson.<sup>94</sup> The following year the two women climbed in the Mt Cook region, with Alister Duthie and guide Kurt Suter to add to their experience.<sup>95</sup> Late in 1934 Betsy Blunden led Lella Davidson and Rosamond Harper on an ascent of Mt Sefton from the west, the first 10,000ft peak ascended by an all-women party.<sup>96</sup> Yet none of these women climbed high again, and no lasting group of women climbers was established in the South Island. However, by the mid-1930s, with help from the VUCTC which acted as a feeder club, the Tararua TC had developed a strong group of women mountaineers. Their number was sufficient for companionship and mutual support, and for a several years they tramped and climbed as equals with Tararua men and made all-women trips and climbs.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> B Anderson PP NZAC Arch; Gallagher p35; PC Betsy Anderson 16 January 1994

<sup>93</sup> PC Marion Borrie 17 September 1993, 20 January 1994; PC Ivy Rollinson 5 April 1995

<sup>94</sup> Ivy Smith halted at about 7000ft. *NZAJ* 1933 p252-3; Greta Stevenson Photo Album Hocken; PC Marion Borrie 20 January 1994; PC Ivy Rollinson 5 April 1995

<sup>95</sup> *NZAJ* 1934 p295-99; PC Alister Duthie 28 January 1994

<sup>96</sup> Newspaper account by Rosamond Harper, AP Harper PP NZAC Arch; *NZAJ* 1935 p152; Gallagher p17-8; PC Betsy Anderson 16 January 1994. Betsy Blunden and Rosamond Harper had spent much of 1934 at Arthur's Pass, doing some guiding and making a winter ascent of Mt Rolleston - *NZAJ* 1935 p136

<sup>97</sup> Joyce Chisholm, Jean Shallcrass, Joan Singleton, Mildred Huggins and Betty Lorimer were the most active. *NZAJ* 1935 p137,140-2, 1936 p354,356-7, 1937 p106, 1938 p280; Greig p60-3,65,71-2. Among Singleton's many ascents was a solo winter climb of Mt Speight (c7000ft) in the upper Waimakariri.



Yet it was difficult to sustain groups of women mountaineers and to create the continuity of companionship and experience which men achieved automatically because of their numbers. Each small group of women which did more than moderate tramping had to develop its own skills and experience. In that process they rediscovered the enjoyment women could find through mountaineering and independence in the natural environment. They were limited by the attitudes of society, the dominance of male mountaineers, and sometimes by lack of income, but with the energy of youth and help from some club members, they could overcome those problems. One social convention they had difficulty escaping was the expectation that in marriage women would focus on the home. If women were attracted to the mountains while at school or soon after it was possible to have a number of years climbing before marriage and children. Sometimes study or employment limited mountain activity, but it was marriage which most often brought an end to women's mountain activity in the interwar years.<sup>98</sup>

So the new independent male climbers, who could often continue their activity after marriage, dominated the New Zealand climbing world in the 1930s. Although a few women made significant climbs, and guides remained important as mentors and leaders, it was the energetic exploratory mountaineering of young men which created a sound climbing base and set a new pattern. Compared to Europe the climbing was limited in style and technique, but by the Second World War New Zealanders had still not climbed all the significant peaks in their own land, and they increasingly valued the opportunities of their own natural environment. Furthermore, overseas possibilities were opening up where New Zealand's version of climbing could be applied. The Second World War was to mark a major break in the development of New Zealand climbing, but independent mountaineering was sufficiently established to survive the war years.

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<sup>98</sup> The Tararua group split up when most of them left Wellington to go teaching - PC Mavis Davidson 11 October 1994

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### DISRUPTION AND TRIUMPH 1940-1953

There was an increasing and more complex interweaving of the national, international and imperial strands of New Zealand climbing from the late 1930s to 1953. Mountaineering had developed in nationalistic ways during the 1930s, and the Second World War gave no reason to reduce confidence in local practices, in spite of the enforced decrease in activity. The war showed how deep was the attachment of New Zealand mountaineers to their sport and their country's mountain environment. The circumstances of war did offer a range of new possibilities to climbers, but these had very little impact on climbing in New Zealand. The immediate aftermath of war saw a resumption of the systems and patterns of the 1930s. However, just before the war the assurance in New Zealand climbing had become a base for the first moves towards a more international focus. A few years of regeneration after the war created enough confidence in local climbing for some of the more skilled and ambitious New Zealand mountaineers once again to seek challenges overseas. The broader world view created by war encouraged this expansion. New Zealand climbing on an international stage became centred on Mt Everest through involvement in British expeditions which drew New Zealanders into a more traditional imperialism. The greatest achievement<sup>1</sup> in the history of New Zealand climbing was Edmund Hillary's successful first ascent, on 29 May 1953, of Mt Everest, the highest mountain in the world. The actual climb was an important moment for humans and their natural world, but it also signified complex relationships for New Zealanders. The ascent reiterated special links between New Zealand and Britain. At home New Zealand mountaineers became merged into the national identity as a result of Everest, which at the same time assured them of a high profile world-wide.

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<sup>1</sup> Other key achievements had been the first ascent of Mt Cook by a party of young New Zealanders on Christmas Day 1894, and the first Grand Traverse of Mt Cook by the overseas woman climber Freda Du Faur and her skilled New Zealand guides on 3 January 1913. The exploratory mountaineering of the 1930s had much activity but few significant moments.

## THE IMPACT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR ON CLIMBING

The continued development of a specifically New Zealand style of climbing was put on hold for the duration of the Second World War. Climbers could not and did not stand apart from the disruptions of 1939-45. They accepted the requirements of war and they put commitment to the national effort first. Recreation was limited by war, and mountaineering trips and ascents of peaks were no exception, being much reduced in number by war service and transport restrictions. There was no time for lengthy exploratory mountaineering,<sup>2</sup> and guided climbing almost ceased to occur.<sup>3</sup> Yet throughout the war some semblance of normality was maintained.<sup>4</sup> Clubs attempted to keep the systems and practices of the 1930s alive and, despite the great difficulties, managed to do so. Most mountain clubs were able to draw on the membership and abilities of women and older men to ensure they functioned to a limited degree. There was always some climbing, the membership of clubs was maintained,<sup>5</sup> and their activity, though restricted, continued in modified form.

The young adventurous males who dominated mountain clubs willingly volunteered for war service in the common belief that they were fighting not just for their country, but for the British Empire and the free world in a struggle against evil.<sup>6</sup> There was some perception by mountaineers that they were, through their recreation, well prepared for the struggle: "the good

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<sup>2</sup> NZAJ 1941 p39

<sup>3</sup> NZAJ 1941-5; Bowie p83-95; Mahoney p72-3

<sup>4</sup> NZAJ, CM, and *Tararua Trampler* 1940-1945 show both the normal and the abnormal, but their very existence is an illustration of the former. Only in the middle of the war, for a year or more after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, did 'normality' falter - NZAJ 1942 p136,139,195; Greig p92

<sup>5</sup> The NZAC increased its membership during the war from 379 in 1939 to 548 in 1945, perhaps because the associate member system was working to include beginners, and servicemen were kept on the roll - NZAJ 1939-45 Annual Reports

<sup>6</sup> CM 1940 p92

fellowship...The training and hardships which have been endured in the back country will serve to fortify...bodies and minds for the greater demands about to be made."<sup>7</sup> Active climbers who had "given evidence of tenacity, perseverance, and outstanding courage" in the shadow of danger in the mountains, had developed the qualities which could meet the particular demands placed on "sturdy manhood" by war.<sup>8</sup> However, unlike in Europe where alpine troops were involved in the fighting,<sup>9</sup> little notice was taken of climbers in the New Zealand forces,<sup>10</sup> and some super-fit mountaineers were rejected for active service.<sup>11</sup> The qualities which climbers ascribed to themselves were thought to be the traits of New Zealand manhood in general, and seldom were specific climbing skills needed by New Zealanders in the war.<sup>12</sup>

A large proportion of climbers served in the armed forces, often overseas. With a young male membership the Canterbury Mountaineering Club was most severely affected. By August 1940 many CMC members had volunteered for military service and "The call of national duty...[had] already unbalanced the workings of the club".<sup>13</sup> 54 CMC members were on active service, about half overseas, and in the following year 97 were serving, only a quarter of those at home. No active service list was published in 1942 because it would have included almost the whole "membership roll as practically all members ...physically fit, [were] serving in one or another branch of the services." Older

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<sup>7</sup> CM 1940 p37; see also NZAJ 1941 70-1

<sup>8</sup> NZAJ 1945 p62

<sup>9</sup> Engel *Mountaineering in the Alps* p253-60

<sup>10</sup> Guide Harry Ayres was an exception in being selected for reconnaissance work - Mahoney p72

<sup>11</sup> Maclean p195

<sup>12</sup> At least one group of New Zealand soldiers crossed the Alps when escaping from Italy into Switzerland (Engel p263-4). See also Forbes & McNab p49. Kenneth Grinling, a Hermitage student guide 1927-8, climbed in the Chamonix-Mont Blanc area in 1939. Still in France in October 1943, he used his climbing equipment and skills to escape from the German threat of internment, across mountainous eastern France and into Switzerland - AJHR 1928 p9; NZAJ 1946 p173-83; Engel p261-2

<sup>13</sup> CM 1940 p37,92

members took their places in the Home Guard and the Emergency Precautions Service.<sup>14</sup> The branches of the CMC closed down during the war, so much were they affected.<sup>15</sup> The membership of the New Zealand Alpine Club was more varied, including women and a wider age range, but it too was markedly influenced by war. The NZAC's Annual Report 1942 noted that out of 462 members, over 100 were overseas, probably most of the younger men, and many others were in full-time home service or training.<sup>16</sup> There was a similar pattern in the Tararua Tramping Club which had 113 members out of approximately 400 serve overseas while most others had their lives disrupted.<sup>17</sup>

The commitment of mountaineers to their recreation was shown by the efforts they made to overcome difficulties, though planning usually had to be short-term and activity close to home.<sup>18</sup> Clubs shared transport, especially in a city like Wellington.<sup>19</sup> Individuals and small groups could acquire petrol, use buses or trains, or regard the problem as a challenge rather than a restriction.<sup>20</sup> Ed Hillary walked, cycled and motorcycled from the RNZAF base near Blenheim to the Kaikouras, a distance of more than fifty miles (80km). After being shifted to New Plymouth, he would cycle to Mt Egmont to climb, as did some Taranaki AC members.<sup>21</sup> Mechanical ingenuity created a number of vehicles powered by producer gas rather than petrol.<sup>22</sup> The Arthur's Pass area, accessible by rail,

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<sup>14</sup> CM 1942 p50. At the beginning of the war the CMC had about 250 members including branches.

<sup>15</sup> CM 1942 p47-8, 1943 p48, 1946 p87,90

<sup>16</sup> NZAJ 1942 p220

<sup>17</sup> TTC membership: 1942 375; 1943 406, 1944 484, 1945 480 - *Tararua Trampler* July 1943 p1, July 1945 p1. Greig *Tararua Story* p92,107

<sup>18</sup> *Tararua Trampler* 1940-45 Notes on "Coming Tramps"; Maclean p198-9

<sup>19</sup> *Tararua Trampler* 1940-45 "Coming Tramps", "Combined Clubs Lorry Transport"; Maclean p198-9

<sup>20</sup> NZAJ 1940 p198, 1942 p189

<sup>21</sup> B Hillary *Nothing Venture, Nothing Win* London 1975 p33-8; MacAlpine p14-5

<sup>22</sup> P Powell *Men Aspiring* Wellington 1967 p22-7, photo facing p32; Forbes & MacNab p44-5; Maclean p198

became popular again for Canterbury climbers, whereas the Rakaia and Rangitata peaks which had been so thoroughly explored and climbed in the 1930s were "almost inaccessible" during the war.<sup>23</sup> Call-up dates and leave restrictions were sometimes a stimulus to action, and caused climbers to put pressure on themselves to fit in some climbing in the brief periods they had available.<sup>24</sup> Whether this led to greater risk taking is debatable, though four climbing deaths during 1942-3 renewed demands for safe climbing.<sup>25</sup>

Since it was so difficult to continue mountaineering, much of the club activity was directed at maintaining community spirit and preserving some sense of the normal world outside war. Comradeship had become an important aspect of climbing in the 1930s, and this was intensified in wartime. Club members at home shared in the maintenance and creation of facilities,<sup>26</sup> and held regular meetings for a variety of purposes. Visiting speakers were appreciated, parcels for overseas were packed, funds were raised for the war effort, and social evenings were held.<sup>27</sup> In the armed forces climbers had past as well as present shared activities and difficulties to bring them together. Not only did climbers maintain casual connections during the war but they also met more formally to "endeavour to recapture some of the 'spirit of the hills'".<sup>28</sup> Like many other organisations, mountain clubs offered support to members, and made special efforts to keep climbers in touch with their fellows, whether at home or overseas.<sup>29</sup> Clubs put considerable energy into the preparation of parcels to

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<sup>23</sup> CM 1943 p47

<sup>24</sup> NZAJ 1942 p162,164; CM 1941 p3, 1942 p33-5, 1943 p3,9

<sup>25</sup> NZAJ 1943 p1-6, reprinted CM 1943 p10-14. For deaths see: NZAJ 1943 p3,72-6,81-5, CM 1943 p44-6

<sup>26</sup> NZAJ 1940 p241-2, 1942 p196-9, 1943 p64-5, 1944 p191-4; CM 1942 p3-7, 1945 p3-8,75; Maclean p200

<sup>27</sup> NZAJ 1940-45 "Proceedings of the Club and Sections"; *Tararua Trampler* 1940-45 "Social Notes", "War Work Notes", "Botanical Circle Notes"; Greig p93

<sup>28</sup> CM 1941 p108; NZAJ 1942 p204-5; Maclean p196

<sup>29</sup> NZAJ 1942 p195

send to troops overseas, and where possible these included, "to the delight of recipients, copies of club magazines". The larger clubs continued to produce their journals and newsletters as a deliberate effort to maintain contact for the present and continuity for the future.<sup>30</sup> There was less formal communication as well,<sup>31</sup> and other publications which included articles on mountain country and climbing were also sent to servicemen.<sup>32</sup>

The war years revealed more starkly one particular dimension of mountaineering - the considerable depth of feeling which existed in many hundreds of New Zealanders for their mountains and the sport they practised there. This had not appeared in the First World War, and practical focus on appropriation and conquest had seldom allowed intense attachment to be revealed at other times. As war continued, the mountains became especially significant in emotional and psychological terms and assisted climbers in coping with the pressures and processes of wartime. They were not just a setting for enjoyable sport of the past or occasional present, but idealistic places of peace, away from the pressures and demands of war, offering hope for the future.<sup>33</sup> Mountaineering gave brief escape, "restful companionship and the relaxation of the outdoors", but the fact that it was often not possible created a "sense of loss, frustration and futility". Sometimes there was a sense of emptiness and loneliness in the mountains because of the reduced number of climbers.<sup>34</sup> Any mountain visit came to be valued time away from both city and

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<sup>30</sup> NZAJ 1940 p279, 1941 p41,110, 1942-6 Section Reports; Maclean p198. There was also pressure to conserve paper - CM 1942 p50

<sup>31</sup> An anonymous member of the Otago Section of NZAC (Roland Ellis - M Kelly *Mill in the Valley* Dunedin 1973 p63) produced 41 issues of "Yodellings" in four years from September 1941. The Wellington section imitated this with "Warblings" - NZAJ 1942 p201-2,229, 1943 p101,104, 1944 p226,233, 1945 p98,106,109, 1946 p271,282

<sup>32</sup> *Journeys*, the magazine of the South Islands Travel Association, first published May 1941. See Preface *Journeys* No2 1 August 1941.

<sup>33</sup> "An Exile's Dream" - poem written by prisoner of war Gordon Buchanan, NZAJ 1942 p167

<sup>34</sup> NZAJ 1942 p162, 1943 p15

war activities, even if it was only to the base hut at Arthur's Pass.<sup>35</sup> The mountains now offered an unchanging, predictable and refreshing world and a memory of normality, in contrast to the pressures and uncertainties of war. In the natural world were to be found freedom and simple pleasures, and the mountains allowed climbers to dream of what might be in a more perfect world undisturbed by war.<sup>36</sup> Warwick Newton's mountaineering in 1941 was "a pilgrimage to...gain brief respite from the devastated war-ridden world",<sup>37</sup> and the following year Fred Tozer found it "good to be among the hills once more, away from a world gone mad."<sup>38</sup> In 1943 Neil Hamilton wrote:

*"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills  
From whence cometh my help."*

Never, it would seem, have the Psalmists words been more appropriate than at the present time, for only the lover of mountains knows to what extent we derive spiritual, mental and physical strength from the Everlasting Hills.<sup>39</sup>

Others too occasionally sought to explore notions of the spirituality which might be found in the mountains, and the solace that might offer for all the loss and restriction of war time. Nature was God's creation, while war was of human beings, so God, who offered hope for the future, was to be approached and worshipped "on nature, a most sublime altar".<sup>40</sup>

However, as there had been in the First World War, there was a contrasting view of recreation. Although there was a strong desire among climbers to be in the mountains and go climbing more often, there was also doubt whether the mountains in New Zealand should be enjoyed while so many other climbers were at risk of their lives in a more vital struggle overseas. The awareness of "friends and fellow-climbers doing a serious job elsewhere" caused some

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<sup>35</sup> CM 1942 p50

<sup>36</sup> CM 1941 p79, 1942 p50; NZAJ 1941 p74, 1942 p195-6, 1943 p8, 1944 p174; Forbes & MacNab p45

<sup>37</sup> CM 1941 p72

<sup>38</sup> NZAJ 1942 p124

<sup>39</sup> NZAJ 1943 p8

<sup>40</sup> Warwick Newton "Some Spiritual Reflections of a Mountaineer" NZAJ 1942 p154



climbers left in New Zealand to be half-hearted about their mountaineering,<sup>41</sup> and the veteran Otago climber Jock Sim thought that was how it should be. So few had the freedom to enjoy the mountains that to do so was out of place, except perhaps for those snatching a last climb before fulfilling national obligations.<sup>42</sup> The principal commitment must now be to the war, not to climbing. This led to calls for greater care and safety in the mountains, even late in the war, because "Every man and woman in New Zealand...should be, engaged to the limit of his capacity in work of national importance". Refreshment in the mountains was beneficial but danger in the mountains threatened the war effort, and for climbers to give up risk-taking was nothing compared to the sacrifices of the troops overseas.<sup>43</sup>

An emotional dimension was thus revealed by the stresses of war, while the practicalities of the recreation were maintained as best they could be. However, the war years also offered a number of different possibilities and opportunities to mountaineers both at home and overseas. Within New Zealand the restrictions of war and the absence of so many men could have resulted in progress, through more solo climbing, winter ascents, and a focus on local rock climbing as a substitute recreation. Leave limitations did occasionally lead to winter and solo expeditions, but neither was common, and rock climbing was still for instruction in general mountaineering techniques.<sup>44</sup> Nor did the lack of male climbers in New Zealand encourage all-women climbing of which there had been limited example in the 1930s. There was neither the time nor the freedom to conceptualise new ways of climbing, and the group ethos remained firmly fixed in the 1930s and on the maintenance of existing systems and

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<sup>41</sup> Andy Anderson *NZAJ* 1942 p166

<sup>42</sup> *NZAJ* 1942 p195

<sup>43</sup> *NZAJ* 1944 p209, 1945 p62

<sup>44</sup> *Tararua Trampler* 1940-45 "Coming Tramps" and Fixture Cards. W R Esquilant (known as 'Pat' & sometimes 'Bert') and Steve Brockett attempted and finally succeeded on Mt Tapuaenuku in mid-1940, but an attempt on Mt Alarm showed the hazards of frostbite in winter (*NZAJ* 1941 p72-4). Ed Hillary made his first solo climbing trip into the Kaikouras winter 1944 (Hillary *Nothing Venture* p33-8).

practices. There was some belief during the war that climbers were no longer following safe practices and, in this sense too, a conservative attitude became appeared, particularly in the NZAC.<sup>45</sup> and in the preparations clubs made for after the war. The resumption of the freedom to climb was perceived in terms of the past.<sup>46</sup>

In the First World War the number and proportion of women climbing had increased markedly, but neither women's climbing, nor independence for women in the mountains, was specifically encouraged by the Second World War.<sup>47</sup> A greater war effort was required of all New Zealanders than in the First World War. Women played their part in this and increasingly worked outside the home at the direction of the state, but this could restrict recreational activities.<sup>48</sup> Local tramping was fairly common, but women made few high climbs during the Second World War, and most continued to be dependent on men in their climbing. June Mulvay worked as a guide at the Hermitage in the 1943-4 season, but this was exceptional.<sup>49</sup> The absence of so many men gave her the opportunity, and also meant a higher proportion of women at the climbing camps and instruction schools held by the NZAC in 1941 and 1944, but these were just temporary reductions in the domination of men.<sup>50</sup> A few women took

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<sup>45</sup> NZAJ 1943 p1-6, 1944 p151-67, 1945 p36-40; CM 1943 p10-14, 1946 p33

<sup>46</sup> NZAJ 1941 p40-1, 1942 p195, 1943 p56-9, 1944 p109-12, 151-67, 170-3, 1945 p1-9, 36-52, 62-3, 1946 p144-58; CM 1946 p20. The publication of mountain route guides (NZAJ 1943 p56-9, 1944 p170-3, 1945 p36-52) might lead to safer climbing, but it was a conservative measure compared to the independence of the 1930s. The planning of clubs for after the war tended to look back for its inspiration.

<sup>47</sup> An exception was Mavis Davidson who did much of her tramping alone in wartime - PC 5 January 1995

<sup>48</sup> JVT Baker *The New Zealand People at War War Economy* Wellington 1965 p90-1, 100-1, 155-6, 437; E Ebbett *When the Boys were Away* Wellington 1984 passim; L Edmond *ed Women in Wartime* Wellington 1986 passim; D Montgomerie "Man-Powering Women: Industrial Conscription During the Second World War" in B Brookes, C Macdonald & M Tennant eds *Women in History 2* Wellington 1992 p184-204

<sup>49</sup> June Mulvay (née Gray, later Ashurst) guided 1943-4, but was forced out by the return of male guides - Mahoney p71; PC June Ashurst 15 January 1994

<sup>50</sup> NZAJ 1940 p155-67, 229-30, 1941 p12-20, 34-8, 1945 p1-9, 1946 p144-58

the opportunity to climb as equals with men during the war,<sup>51</sup> and this continued after it, but there was no all-women high climbing in wartime.<sup>52</sup> Only the record of one all-women tramping trip suggested that there was value for women in being independent of men in the mountains.<sup>53</sup> More overt was a continued bias against mountaineering women on the part of some men.<sup>54</sup>

The war years did give women one type of opportunity which they had not had before. There was a significant but temporary shift in the leadership of mountain clubs as most of them depended on their older and women members to take over as office holders and keep club affairs ticking over as best they could. Often for the first time, women took on official responsibilities and assumed greater prominence than they had ever had in clubs, to the point of ensuring their survival.<sup>55</sup> The Taranaki Alpine Club "became female oriented and for the first (and only) time...had a lady Club Captain in the person of Mrs Jean Weston who did a terrific job in keeping the Club together."<sup>56</sup> The NZAC was also able to keep some of its sections going with the help of women.<sup>57</sup> However, the importance of women in the administration of clubs was usually only a temporary expedient, with older or returning males preferred later in the war and after it. In the NZAC the number of women on section committees, established during the war, was generally maintained after 1945,<sup>58</sup> which

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<sup>51</sup> CM 1941 p81,88-9, 1942 p14-17; NZAJ 1941 p84,89-90, 1943 p8-15,49,54-5, 1944 p176-7,180-2, 1945 p32-5,53-4,55-6,58 - Joan Barnett, Ngaira Begg, Dot English, Madeleine Hamilton, Marjorie Macaulay, Susie Sanders and Flora Smith. Many of these women continued to climb after the war, sometimes with guides on the higher peaks - NZAJ 1946 p217, 1947 p31-7,99, 1948 p255

<sup>52</sup> NZAJ 1940-46

<sup>53</sup> NZAJ 1943 p54-5 - a Routeburn-Greystone trip in winter conditions, May 1942, by Susie Sanders, Kathleen Buchanan and Joan Barnett.

<sup>54</sup> CM 1944 p25

<sup>55</sup> Greig p68,92-3,104; Forbes & McNab p48; PC Mavis Davidson 11 October 1994

<sup>56</sup> McAlpine *Taranaki Alpine Club* p14,42

<sup>57</sup> NZAJ 1942 p195

<sup>58</sup> NZAJ 1940-1952 lists of office bearers

suggests a permanent alteration brought about by the war. However, some section committees never had women members, the proportion of women was not high, and it is doubtful if men saw this wartime committee membership as a permanent role for women.<sup>59</sup>

There is no doubt that war-enforced travel overseas and focus on other parts of the world broadened horizons for many New Zealanders and gave them a more international perspective. The war also gave possibilities for a wider experience of climbing in many different places.<sup>60</sup> Mountaineers wished to spend time tramping or climbing, they felt a sense of loss when they could not do so, and took a variety of opportunities to pursue their recreation. The requirements of war moved people around New Zealand and brought them close to unfamiliar hills and mountains, ascents of which might be attempted because they were the only climbs available.<sup>61</sup> Overseas, keen climbers found something to scramble up wherever they were, whether it was the pyramids in Egypt,<sup>62</sup> tropical summits on Pacific islands,<sup>63</sup> rock peaks in England<sup>64</sup> or easy mountains in the Middle East.<sup>65</sup> If there was no climbing there might be some skiing, as 'Pat' Esquilant found in the Laurentian mountains north of Montreal in Canada.<sup>66</sup> There was also opportunity to climb in Europe at the end of the war. A New Zealand Alpine Leave Centre in northern Italy's Dolomite mountains from mid-1945 was led and organised by New Zealand mountaineers from various clubs. Though the aims were rest and relaxation,

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<sup>59</sup> Leading climber Mavis Davidson was not immediately accepted in official positions - Gallagher p36

<sup>60</sup> NZAJ 1946 p226

<sup>61</sup> CM 12 1943 p51-2

<sup>62</sup> Maclean *Tararua* p197

<sup>63</sup> CM 1942 p55, 1944 p51-3, 1945 p85; NZAJ 1946 p118; Hillary *Nothing Venture* p50-5,59; Maclean p197-8

<sup>64</sup> CM 1942 p55, 1945 p42-4,54-7; NZAJ 1941 p32, 1945 p27

<sup>65</sup> CM 1942 p18-9,67

<sup>66</sup> CM 1942 p52

the main activities were skiing and climbing, mostly on rock.<sup>67</sup> Through this Centre some 3000 New Zealanders enjoyed "a taste of life in the high hills". However, it was the organisers and those already mountaineers who benefited most from their time in the Dolomites, and the company of skilled Italian guides gave them the chance to improve their rock climbing.<sup>68</sup> A few experienced mountaineers also took the opportunity to climb elsewhere in Europe, through armed forces leave and work or study immediately after the war.<sup>69</sup>

## POST-WAR CLIMBING

The most striking feature of the Second World War for New Zealand climbing was that, apart from the reduction in numbers climbing, it had little impact. Few of the possibilities offered were taken up during the war or immediately afterwards. Winter, solo, rock and all-women climbing were not adopted. The national New Zealand pattern of climbing remained very similar in the later 1940s to that of the 1930s. The internationalism provided by war did not bring changes in New Zealand climbing either. Ex-soldiers were not led, by their Alpine Leave Centre experience, to take up climbing as a recreation back home, and the improved rock skills acquired in the Dolomites were not specifically applied back in New Zealand. Nor was the European practice of face climbing using front-point crampons brought back to the many snow and ice faces in the Southern Alps. A certain conservatism in New Zealand mountaineering continued after the war as both the recreation and its clubs, like society, sought

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<sup>67</sup> Other activities included tramping, horse riding, trout fishing, chamois shooting, swimming, boating, tennis and bowls - Souvenir programme New Zealand Alpine Leave Centre, NZAC Arch; NZAJ 1946 p183-203

<sup>68</sup> NZAJ 1946 p183-203; CM 1946 p42-3,46-7

<sup>69</sup> CM 1946 p39-46,115-7, 1947 p5-13,96-7,118; NZAJ 1946 p197-99,201-4, 1947 p109-10,126-7. One of the climbers in Europe, 'Pat' Esquilant, was killed on the Weisshorn, 23 August 1946. He was one of the most active New Zealand climbers in the 1940s, in spite of his war service, and his climbing ambitions reached as far as the Himalayas.

to return to a past which no longer quite existed, as well as look to a new future. Yet the clue to some future developments did lie in the 1930s. Then increased competence and confidence on New Zealand mountains had led some climbers overseas, to different and higher peaks which they were usually able to climb without altering their techniques and practices. Once New Zealand climbing was re-established after the Second World War, the same process occurred, and this, in combination with international perspectives acquired during the war, led elite New Zealand climbers to the Himalayan mountains.

The end of the Second World War did not mark an immediate return to 'normality' in society, and neither did it at once restore climbing to its pre-war quantity and quality. In the immediate post-war years the main focus of the wider community was on jobs, homes and families, and reconstruction was to be based on full male employment and female domesticity. This placed considerable pressure on both men and women and could restrict recreation, especially for married people. Many of the climbers of the 1930s did, in the post-war period, have the responsibility of being breadwinners for wives and children. The 'boys' who had been away in the war had the right to sport and leisure on their return, but many servicemen had had enough risk, danger and adventure to last them a life time. However, there was no doubt that climbing would continue and increase. It had become more acceptable to the wider society in the 1930s and mountain mateship had been confirmed by the war experience. The courage, toughness, independence and versatile skills apparently shown by New Zealanders in war, fitted them for climbing, if they wished. Male dominance of both recreation and society continued, and men were able to leave home and family for recreation. In particular, many who had been denied opportunities by war could not wait to begin mountaineering in peacetime.

Climbers and their mountain clubs spent several years settling down to life in peace time and reorganising their activities in line with new expectations. Only after this period did the increased climbing lead to further developments.<sup>70</sup> Most participation in mountaineering came through clubs whose membership rose steadily with the addition of novices. These mountain organisations again provided systems whereby people could resume or begin climbing without great difficulty. There was a revival of pre-war activities - meetings, regular trips and hut building<sup>71</sup> - which enabled would-be mountaineers to meet potential companions, acquire knowledge and skill, and enter into an established social situation.<sup>72</sup> There was also more frequent mountain instruction to acquaint newcomers with mountain techniques and to improve safety standards. Such was the number of beginners that sometimes there were problems providing sufficient instruction and organisation.<sup>73</sup> Guides at the Hermitage also took on renewed importance for a few years as instructors in high climbing. Some of those who wished to climb, but had been prevented by war from doing as much as they would have liked, employed guides as the quickest means to competence and achievement.<sup>74</sup> Other climbers preferred the freedom of exploring more remote valleys and peaks in small groups, but nearly all, sooner or later, developed into independent mountaineers with a

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<sup>70</sup> NZAJ 1949 p1,6-8

<sup>71</sup> NZAC sections took responsibility for a variety of huts. In time clubs put less effort into huts as the state, especially through the NZ Forest Service and the National Parks system, began to provide shelter in the mountains - NZAJ 1945 p62-3, 1947 p118-21, 1948 p277-81, 1949 p114-22, 1951 p111-2, 1952 p372, 1953 p129-36,250-3; CM 1946 p33-4, 1948 p188-96, 1949 p343, 1950 p5; Burrell p81-6; Forbes & McNab p58-63; Maclean p226-8

<sup>72</sup> The importance of communication was recognised. The NZAC which had the most wide-spread membership produced a regular NZAC *Bulletin* from 1946 in imitation of wartime "Yodellings" & "Warblings" - NZAJ 1946 p259, 1947 p153. Local clubs used meetings and personal contact more but also continued to produce regular newsletters, for instance *The Tararua Trumper*, *Alpinesport*.

<sup>73</sup> NZAJ 1946 p144-58,226,231-3, 1947 p75-85,116-7, 1948 p248-50,303, 1949 p144; CM 1947 p61-4, 1948 p183-7,200,225, 1949 p339-42. Associate members in the NZAC were between 66% and 71% of the total membership 1946-1957 - NZAJ 1946 p264, 1947 p152, 1951 p140, 1957 p217

<sup>74</sup> NZAJ 1947 p115-6, 1948 p276-7 Ed Hillary was one of those who used guides initially - NZAJ 1947 p95-8, 1948 p179-83

range of skills. Tramping and straightforward climbing increased throughout New Zealand, and suitable places, such as Mt Ruapehu, saw the rapid development of skiing. As always publicity for climbing tended to concentrate on the novel, or the more difficult and dangerous, but underneath the publicised ascents in the 1940s and 1950s there was a widening club base of mountain recreation in which members of different ages, experience and backgrounds were encouraged to join.

A greater variety of people than before climbed in New Zealand after the Second World War. This was brought about by the war and by the continuing progress towards democratisation of the recreation as it became even more widely available. In particular post-war climbers included a wider range of ages than before. Many 1930s mountaineers, now approaching 40 years of age, continued to climb or to be involved in mountain clubs. Younger people who would have made climbing their principal recreation in the early 1940s felt they had missed out. After the war they tried to make up for lost time.<sup>75</sup> Others had lived through the restrictions of war as children and reached an age and desire after the war for independence and adventure which could be found in the mountains. This last group produced many young unmarried climbers of both sexes in the later 1940s and early 1950s, often students at universities and teachers' colleges. As in the 1930s, their holidays encouraged rapid acquisition of skill and experience. Older climbers showed a wider range of background and occupation, though there was always a considerable proportion in some sort of professional employment.

Not only did most mountaineering remain club-based, but the form of climbing in New Zealand after the war continued to be expeditionary so that the basic patterns of mountaineering were the same after the war as before it. Tramping and the idea of personal exploration remained the foundation stones of New Zealand climbing, though much more assistance came to be available to

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<sup>75</sup> Ed Hillary, aged 26 in mid-1945, was a prime example of this type.



mountaineers. Guidebooks to mountain country were written or revised,<sup>76</sup> maps were drawn or elaborated by clubs and their mountaineers,<sup>77</sup> and huts made tramping country and peaks a little more accessible. The development of snow camps, especially in the form of snow-caves, helped create safer high climbing bases in more remote areas.<sup>78</sup> Horses were less and less used to approach the mountains,<sup>79</sup> but improved motorised transport assisted both club activity and mountaineering itself. The greater availability of aircraft, and of tracked and 4-wheel drive vehicles surplus to official requirements after the war, made it possible to use such means to deliver building materials to hut sites.<sup>80</sup> There was also increased transport to the mountains as wartime restrictions were lifted, and both petrol and motor vehicles became more freely available.

Climbing also carried on in similar style to the 1930s because the equipment used for mountaineering altered little. As in the interwar period, New Zealand climbers were slow to adopt new equipment and change the way they climbed. Initially post-war import restrictions, which applied to the whole country, made it difficult to acquire tramping and climbing gear manufactured overseas. An approach to the government led to import licences for specialist equipment,<sup>81</sup> and firms which had been supplying mountaineers before the war

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<sup>76</sup> W S Gilkison & A H Hamilton eds *Moir's Guide Book* Dunedin 2nd ed 1948; N S Seaward *The Milford Country* Christchurch 1950; J Pascoe *The Southern Alps (Part 1)* Christchurch 1951; L R Hewitt & M M Davidson *Mount Cook Alpine Regions* Christchurch 1953; R Hewitt & M Davidson *The Mountains of New Zealand* Wellington 1954; A B Scanlan ed *Mt. Egmont Handbook* New Plymouth 1955

<sup>77</sup> Aerial surveying occurred in the 1950s & 1960s, and led to the production of more accurate inch-to-the-mile maps (NZMS 1) which were available to the public and supplanted club maps.

<sup>78</sup> CM 1940 p83, 1941 p83-5; NZAJ 1948 p246-50, 1949 p55-7,61,93-4,97, 1950 p221-8,232-3,262, 1951 p66-7, 1952 p273-4,297,319-20,325,363-71, 1955 p190-203

<sup>79</sup> Horses had been most useful for carrying heavy packs in the larger valleys of Canterbury and Otago, and they had also helped in river crossing.

<sup>80</sup> CM 1941 p38 - truck for Anti-Crow hut; NZAJ 1948 p277-9 - GMC truck for Aspiring hut Matukituki valley; CM 1948 p194-5 - aeroplane used for rebuilding of Haast & Hooker huts; CM 1950 p65 - bren carrier for rebuilding of Banfield Memorial hut Jagged stream - photo CM 1975 facing p80

<sup>81</sup> NZAJ 1946 p234

continued in this business. One well-known climber, Neil Hamilton of Christchurch, on his return from climbing in Europe after the war, also took up the opportunity provided by the import licence system. As the number of mountaineers increased, more importers and retailers responded to the commercial opportunities offered, and catered for the variety of their needs.<sup>82</sup> Initially prices were comparatively high as, for a few years after the war, the cost of living outstripped wages, but after 1950 increasing economic buoyancy made equipment more affordable. The average weekly wage of a skilled worker was a little over £6 per week in 1945, but by 1955 it had risen to about £12.<sup>83</sup> However, even by the latter date the cost of equipment meant the expenditure of many weeks' wages. Frame packs ranged in price from £6 to £10 and parkas cost about £3 10s. A reasonable sleeping bag would be at least £7 and a sleeping bag cover £3. Increasingly these items were made in New Zealand, but specialist climbing equipment, such as ice axes and crampons, had to come from overseas, and they would cost at least £5 each.<sup>84</sup> Two other significant new items of equipment were imported after the Second World War, rubber-soled boots and nylon climbing ropes,<sup>85</sup> but it took years of discussion and the occasional accident before both were accepted as the norm in New Zealand climbing.<sup>86</sup>

The patterns of New Zealand climbing which continued after the Second World War included gender differences. Like most strongly physical recreations, leisure pursuits in the mountains, especially tramping and climbing, were

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<sup>82</sup> NZAJ 1946-56 adverts: Hamilton established the Snowline Sports Centre in Christchurch.

<sup>83</sup> JVT Baker p335-6, 536-40; *Oxford History* p370-1; *New Zealand Official 1990 Yearbook* p378

<sup>84</sup> NZAJ 1946-56, NZAC *Bulletin* 1951-56, *Tararua* 1947-50 Adverts

<sup>85</sup> Oscar Coberger advertised nylon ropes from 1947; he and Neil Hamilton advertised rubber-soled boots from 1949 (NZAJ Adverts); CM 1975 p15. These boots and nylon ropes were developed during the war, though rubber-soled footwear had long been available and had been used for rock climbing as early as 1894 (Tom Fyfe on Mt Malte Brun) and for walking in the 1920s - NZ *Life* August 1927 CMC Records CMA

male-dominated in numbers and attitudes. At marriage women were expected to give up such recreation, as well as paid employment, in the expectation that their roles would be domestic, serving husband, house and children.<sup>87</sup> There were always some women climbing and those who persisted tended to have fewer domestic responsibilities because they were unmarried or childless. In the more settled New Zealand society after 1950, the number of women climbers increased, and they belonged to all clubs but one.<sup>88</sup> Most were dependent on male climbers or guides, and they could find it difficult to gain places on challenging trips, but some climbed as equals with men who respected their abilities.<sup>89</sup> It was not easy for skilled women climbers to link up with others who were experienced,<sup>90</sup> but from the 1950-1 season there were more all-women trips and a few groups of women mountaineers emerged again.<sup>91</sup> The culmination of post-war women's climbing was an ascent of Mt Cook by Mavis Davidson, Sheila MacMurray and Doreen Pickens on 6 January 1953.<sup>92</sup> There was a satisfying sense of independence for the women involved, though the quality of the climb was little different from the all-women ascent of Mt Sefton in 1934. Even so, the greater independence and achievement of women in the 1950s began to touch and threaten the boundary of what was

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<sup>86</sup> NZAJ 1948 p218-30, 1950 p279-80, 1956 p495-99; NZAC *Bulletin* XV September 1951 p5; Bowie p123; Mahoney p78; PC Andy Anderson 11 January 1994

<sup>87</sup> PC Mavis Davidson 5 January 1995. In 1953 Doreen Pickens, one of the best women climbers, married into a patriarchal rural Canterbury family which expected her to give up climbing and have children, which she did - PC Doreen Murie 20 January 1994

<sup>88</sup> NZAJ 1947-50 recorded between 20 and 30 women climbing each year, with the lowest total in 1949. NZAJ 1951-3 show a steady increase in women climbers, with a total over 50 in 1953. The Canterbury Mountaineering Club remained the one which would not accept women.

<sup>89</sup> *Evening Post* 27 April 1974; Gallagher p16. Men found having a sole woman on a trip very awkward - experience of Gillian Soper in 1948 cited in Gallagher p21-2.

<sup>90</sup> *Evening Post* 27 April 1974; Gallagher p16; PC June Ashurst 15 January 1994

<sup>91</sup> NZAJ 1950-56 trip accounts and lists of climbs, especially 1951 p52-3. The most lasting group of women climbers was in Auckland, and included: Bernie Hynes, Gwen Leonard, Bev Price, Bev Williamson - B Williamson PP NZAC Arch

<sup>92</sup> NZAJ 1953 p42-3; Gallagher p24-5. Davidson & MacMurray were married, and Pickens was about to be.

masculine and what was feminine. This was an issue not easily resolved, but the pressures on women to remain feminine were considerable, to the point where some took make-up with them into the mountains and others restricted their activity.<sup>93</sup>

The first Mt Cook climb by an all-women party was noteworthy, but it stands in marked contrast to the fact that six New Zealand men were climbing in the Himalaya the same year<sup>94</sup> and one of them reached the summit of Mt Everest, the highest mountain in the world. The women had reached a national summit, but the men were operating on an international level and demonstrating a new dimension to New Zealand climbing. In terms of ambitions and achievements a greater difference than ever before had emerged between women and men climbers, once again emphasising male leadership of the recreation. The best women climbers were as skilled as most men but the important new difference was the evolution in later 1940s of a number of elite male climbers with great ambitions.

Most recreational climbing was based on tramping and exploratory mountaineering, but a small group of post-war climbers concentrated primarily on the high peaks of the Mt Cook area. The guide Harry Ayres was a key figure for by 1950 he was clearly the most expert climber in New Zealand and he aided many of the younger climbers who also aimed at the high and difficult peaks.<sup>95</sup> First ascents were the ultimate achievement, but because few significant peaks remained unclimbed, there was, among the best climbers,

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<sup>93</sup> Gallagher p4-6,32-9,41-2,45-6; PC Jennie Gallagher 5 April 1994. For background and wider discussion of the issue of masculinity and femininity see: E Dunning "Sport as a Male Preserve" in N Elias & E Dunning *Quest for Excitement* Oxford 1986 p267-83; H Lenskyj *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality* Toronto 1986 passim; K McCrone *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women 1870-1914* London 1988 p192-242

<sup>94</sup> The Everest expedition completely overshadowed the second New Zealand expedition to the Himalayas, by a Tararua TC party of four. They climbed a peak of 23,545ft and learnt much about altitude and distant expeditions - *NZAJ* 1954 p393-9; A Roberts and others *Himalayan Holiday* Christchurch 1954

<sup>95</sup> G Lowe *Because it is There* London 1959 p8-9; Hillary *Nothing Venture* p76-9

greater competition and a concentration on unclimbed ridges and routes.<sup>96</sup> These were longer and more difficult climbs which developed endurance, but there was little experimentation on faces of rock and ice which were the setting for advanced climbing in Europe and North America. In comparison to these developments overseas, New Zealand climbers had little skill, for their tramping and exploratory mountaineering were technically simple. Even the climbs of the elite in New Zealand could be achieved without much equipment or knowledge of specialist rock- and ice-climbing techniques.<sup>97</sup> The possibilities and advantages of pitons,<sup>98</sup> short ice axes or ice-hammers,<sup>99</sup> and front-point crampons,<sup>100</sup> were not perceived in post-war New Zealand where the residue of British tradition also worked against the use of such 'artificial aids'. This delayed the merging of New Zealand climbers with the leading edge of climbing elsewhere. Yet there had been no time for the lack of technical progress in New Zealand to become an issue since, as early as 1950, the elite climbers<sup>101</sup> saw their local mountaineering as preparation for higher and more challenging peaks, and they proceeded to climbing overseas. For traditional reasons Britain and Europe were sometimes the setting for first overseas climbing ventures,<sup>102</sup> but the Himalaya soon dominated thinking and planning.

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<sup>96</sup> From the late 1930s the south ridge of Mt Cook was the major 'problem' in the Mt Cook area. Guides Harry Ayres and Mick Sullivan led Ed Hillary and Ruth Adams up this ridge 6 February 1948 - *NZAJ* 1948 p179-83. The last unclimbed 8000ft peak in New Zealand, The Black Tower, was ascended on 30 December 1955 - *NZAJ* 1956 p469-72. See also *NZAJ* 1957 Editorial p1.

<sup>97</sup> *NZAJ* 1957 p81-95. Only from the late 1950s did New Zealand climbers begin to attempt steep faces.

<sup>98</sup> Such equipment had first been used in the 1930s (*NZAJ* 1934 p477; *CM* 7 1938 p76-7; *Making New Zealand "The Mountains"* p31) but seldom on mountains before the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>99</sup> A short-handled ice hammer was found useful on Mt Elie de Beaumont late in 1943 (*NZAJ* 1944 p128) but the possibilities of such equipment were little explored in the next 10 years.

<sup>100</sup> These were invented by the Austrian climber Grivel in 1932 (J Cleare *Mountaineering* Poole 1980 p145) but were hardly used in New Zealand till the 1960s.

<sup>101</sup> There were perhaps a dozen New Zealand climbers by 1950 who, with the right experience and good fortune, might have gone on to climb Mt Everest.

<sup>102</sup> *NZAJ* 1951 p45-9, 1952 p262-5, 1953 p87-98; Hillary *Nothing Venture* p98-111

Climbing by New Zealanders in the Himalaya drew together a number of the main strands of local experience. The Second World War had extended the international horizons of New Zealanders, and after it there were more possibilities of travel. The adventure implied in travel and climbing overseas, and the obvious problem of height, made Himalayan climbing new, but in other ways this was a relatively conservative step for New Zealand climbers. Overseas climbing was, however, a natural extension of the achievement of expertise in New Zealand and a resumption of the developments of the 1930s.<sup>103</sup> First ascents and new challenges were also still the aims. The New Zealand style of expeditionary climbing remained valid because it could be applied to Himalayan peaks with alteration only for scale,<sup>104</sup> and this was acknowledged overseas.<sup>105</sup> British heritage in the Indian subcontinent was long known to New Zealand and for climbers the significant aspect was the earlier attempts to ascend Mt Everest. The inclusion of New Zealanders in British Himalayan expeditions 1951-3 made connections such as had not existed for many years between British and New Zealand mountaineering and seemed to reassert an element of imperial tutelage.

The first group of New Zealand climbers reached the Himalayas through their own independent efforts, but inclusion of some of them in post-war British Everest expeditions involved a degree of good fortune and coincidence with overseas developments. Realities of time, money, jobs, study and families determined that there were only four climbers on the first New Zealand expedition to the Garhwal Himalayas in 1951.<sup>106</sup> Lawyer Earle Riddiford was

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<sup>103</sup> 'Dan' Bryant was on the Everest Reconnaissance 1935, Scott Russell on an expedition to the Karakoram or western Himalayas in 1939 (S Russell *Mountain Prospect* London 1946 p145-236; NZAJ 1946 p126-35) which was where the CMC had planned to send a party in 1940.

<sup>104</sup> There was need for more money, forethought and organisation because of distance.

<sup>105</sup> NZAJ 1952 p168; J Hunt *The Ascent of Everest* London 1953 p28; T Longstaff "The Alpine Club Centenary: Retrospect and Prospect" *The Geographical Magazine* October 1957 p295; G Lowe *Because it is There* London 1959 p11-13

<sup>106</sup> NZAJ 1952 p170; E Hillary *High Adventure* London 1955 p20, *Nothing Venture* p112. Two New Zealand climbers had previously been in the Himalayas post-war: Hugh Nelson in 1946 (CM 17 1947 p87-8), and geographer Bill Packard. On a 1950 British

the prime organiser and he was accompanied by George Lowe, Ed Hillary and Ed Cotter.<sup>107</sup> Riddiford, Cotter and a Sherpa climbed Mukut Parbat (23,760ft) on 11 July 1951. This success and the presence of the New Zealanders in the Himalayas were to have an unexpected result. On the recommendations of NZAC President, Harry Stevenson, and Scott Russell in England,<sup>108</sup> two of the New Zealanders were invited to join the Everest Reconnaissance in September-October 1951. The Reconnaissance was led by Eric Shipton who remembered the ability of 'Dan' Bryant in 1935. The achievements of Hillary, in particular, and Riddiford, reinforced Shipton's favourable view of New Zealand climbers and ensured they would be invited again. The publicity these 1951 expeditions generated also ensured that the New Zealand public began to be aware that climbing was another sport in which New Zealand could make a name for itself on a world stage. This was reinforced by the participation of Hillary, Lowe and Riddiford in a 1952 British attempt on Cho Oyu (26,870ft).<sup>109</sup>

New Zealand mountaineers had thus joined both the British and a wider international fraternity of climbers and earned a reputation for themselves.<sup>110</sup> By the end of 1952 when British preparation for Everest in 1953 was in full swing it was clear that a 'British' team would have to include New Zealanders because the capabilities they had shown were likely to improve the chances of success.<sup>111</sup> The British Everest Expedition in 1953 had to be successful if the

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expedition led by climber and explorer Bill Tilman, Packard reached 24,000ft on Annapurna IV - NZAJ 1951 p105, 1952 p206-20

<sup>107</sup> Lowe was a teacher, Hillary a bee-keeper and Cotter a clothing salesman in 1951 when they first teamed up - Lowe p13

<sup>108</sup> NZAC *Bulletin* XXI July 1953 p4. Scott Russell remained in England after the war, a member of the NZAC, the Alpine Club, and the Himalayan Committee which organised British attempts on Mt Everest.

<sup>109</sup> This was organised by the British Everest Committee as Himalayan training in a year when the Nepalese had given the rights to attempt Mt Everest to Swiss climbers - NZAJ 1953 p4-37

<sup>110</sup> Many nationalities had been involved in interwar Himalayan climbing (W Unsworth *Hold the Heights* London 1993 p318-56) and this continued later. A French expedition climbed Annapurna (26,493ft) in 1950, the first 8,000m peak ascended. A few weeks after Everest an Austro-German team put a man on top of Nanga Parbat 26,620ft.

<sup>111</sup> J Hunt *The Ascent of Everest* London 1953 p26

prize of ascending the world's highest point was not to be snatched away by some other nation.<sup>112</sup> The change of leadership from Eric Shipton to John Hunt in September 1952 removed any possibility that the foremost New Zealand climber, guide Harry Ayres, would be included.<sup>113</sup> However, the Himalayan experience of Hillary and Lowe ensured their selection. Hillary was not the most technically skilled of climbers, even by New Zealand standards<sup>114</sup> let alone the much higher standards of Europe. But by 1953 his years of climbing had made him extremely strong and determined to overcome all obstacles. George Lowe too had earned his place and he showed his ability in forcing the access route to Everest up the Lhotse face. However, Lowe and Hillary were never allowed to climb together because Hunt was determined that this would be a 'British' team effort, not a New Zealand benefit. This was an expedition run in military-style, with detailed organisation and discipline imposed from the top, the antithesis of more informal New Zealand exploratory mountaineering. Yet the actual climbing was similar, and both Hillary and Lowe were able to introduce some of their own individualism to the expedition.<sup>115</sup>

Ed Hillary and the Sherpa Tenzing Norgay made the first ascent of Mt Everest on 29 May 1953. This success was elemental, but the interpretations drawn from it were multi-faceted. The achievement belonged to the world community because the two summit climbers came from different countries, both of them small. It was also international since, in a sense, they reached the top of the world's highest mountain on the backs of all other climbers throughout the world. Previous experience led to the success, which was a climactic moment

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<sup>112</sup> Unsworth *Hold the Heights* p359-60,365

<sup>113</sup> Hunt made sure the expedition was 'amateur' as well as British - Hunt p26-30; Hillary *High Adventure* p127,130; *Nothing Venture* p144-7; Mahoney p126-8

<sup>114</sup> Hillary *Nothing Venture* p112

<sup>115</sup> Hillary *High Adventure* p136-238 passim; G Lowe p21-40



for all climbers. However, Hillary and Tenzing were members of a British expedition, so Britain claimed the 'conquest' of Mt Everest as her triumph. It represented the full expression of the traditions of manliness long held to be specifically English. Moreover, the conquest of foreign summits and the involvement of the 'sons of Empire' tied the venture firmly into the panopoly of imperial achievement. The coincidence with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II only a few days later, served, apparently, to glorify the British Queen, nation and empire. Yet New Zealanders could not wholly accept being British on such an occasion. The ascent of Everest was also a triumph on a world scale for New Zealand mountaineering, setting new local standards of climbing and national manhood. This was a feat which not only marked for the public the substantial entry of New Zealanders into world climbing, but immediately identified climbing with New Zealand's developing sense of nationality.

## CONCLUSION

Edmund Hillary, on his return to Mt Everest's South Col, announced the news of the successful ascent to his compatriot George Lowe with the words: "Well, we knocked the bastard off!"<sup>1</sup> This laconic understatement, and the achievement it records, encapsulate much of the essence of New Zealand climbing, both in 1953 and throughout its history. Here were two comrades in adversity, men of undoubted physical and mental prowess, playing leading roles in what was, at the time, believed to be one of the greatest pioneering adventures ever. This was typical New Zealand pioneering climbing on a grand scale. Yet, as was expected of New Zealand men, their pleasure was restrained<sup>2</sup> and they down-played their feats in casual fashion and with 'natural' manly modesty. Through facing and overcoming difficulties and dangers, which seemed extraordinary to the public, they seemed to set an unrivalled example of manhood which other New Zealanders could accept. At the same time they appeared to be 'ordinary blokes' whose toughness, independence, partnership and down-to-earth practicality represented the development and achievements of their nation. Hillary became a New Zealand hero,<sup>3</sup> though this, his most significant climb, was as a member of a British expedition organised and run in very different ways from climbing trips in his homeland.

A British and imperial connection had existed from the beginning of New Zealand climbing, which developed to a considerable extent within that wider cultural framework. In the later nineteenth century the idea and example of recreational mountain climbing had come from Britain, as had the concepts of

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<sup>1</sup> Lowe p40; Hillary *Nothing Venture* p162

<sup>2</sup> Tiredness and altitude naturally contributed to this, but other people were more excited than Hillary and Tenzing - RNZSA D634,D918,D7070; Hunt p208-226; Hillary *Nothing Venture* p162-173; G T Stewart "The British Reaction to the Conquest of Everest" *Journal of Sport History* Vol.7 No1 1980 p21-39

<sup>3</sup> An extra dimension was added to this image by his later work providing schools and hospitals in Nepal, and by his continued high international profile.

guided climbing and a middle-class club. For many years Britain was the 'Mother Country' to most New Zealanders and a variety of links encouraged colonial climbers to become part of British imperialism. This was manifested in appropriation and conquest of the earth's limits which included both distant New Zealand and mountains in many other places. Like British mountaineers, their colonial counterparts defined and legitimated their climbing in terms of adventure, exploration and conquest, that is, in terms of empire. In the late 1930s and after the Second World War, it was British interests in the Himalaya, especially Mt Everest, which gave international challenge and direction to New Zealand climbers, and at the same time linked them to new concepts of empire. Hillary and Tenzing's ascent of Everest was an international achievement, but it was initially presented to the world as a gift from the British Empire to Queen Elizabeth II on the occasion of her coronation on 2 June 1953.<sup>4</sup>

The cultural transference of climbing to New Zealand led to changed practices, and the British model did not prove to be entirely appropriate in the new setting. In particular, an emphasis on class division was almost impossible in the colony. New Zealand climbers were from a range of backgrounds, and, apart from a few such as AP Harper, they did not use their sport to define their upper middle-class gentility as occurred in Britain in the nineteenth century. From the 1880s some of the climbers were working-class. Nor did climbing in New Zealand give much scope for participation in "the expansive dimension of Britain's national identity",<sup>5</sup> for the colony was clearly British without the ascent of its mountains. The greatest difficulties centred on the potential, and occasionally actual, conflict in New Zealand climbing between the imperialistic and the nationalistic cultures which the sport could exemplify. Direct clashes seldom occurred, but a three-way complexity in 1895 showed some of the possible problems of the English class-based paradigm of climbing. An

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<sup>4</sup> Stewart "The British Reaction" p21-37 passim. British and New Zealand climbers and adventurers subsequently joined each other's expeditions - NZAC to Barun valley 1954, AC & Royal Geographical Society to Kangchenjunga 1955, Antarctica 1955-8

<sup>5</sup> P Hansen "British Mountaineering" p275-93,440-3

imperial mountain conqueror from England, and two groups of nationalistic New Zealanders - middle-class 'amateur' mountaineers and working-class climbers who were also employed as guides - found reconciliation and co-operation very difficult.

New Zealand climbers struggled to establish their own systems and patterns. The English model of a gentlemen's climbing club proved to have little application to New Zealand society, either when the New Zealand Alpine Club was first formed in the 1890s, or in its revivals of 1914 and the 1920s. There was a period when climbing was led by local guides, often working for overseas visitors. Then from the 1920s tramping became a new and popular mountain activity, distinctly more independent and vigorous than most rambling and hiking elsewhere in the world. Tramping led to increased participation in mountaineering and made it distinctly more indigenous, closer to the pioneering of the nineteenth century. Though there were restrictions on the participation of women, the mountain clubs which formed from 1919 were otherwise relatively democratic, especially compared to the English Alpine Club.<sup>6</sup> Clubs which catered for a range of mountaineers proved to be the most satisfactory and successful means of formalising and organising recreational climbing in New Zealand. Based on their own institutions, do-it-yourself New Zealand mountaineers were relatively free both of guides and overseas influences by the 1930s. They also made climbing a sport for more than just the affluent in society. Adventurous young New Zealanders focused, in independent and even inward-looking ways, on the plentiful supply of unclimbed peaks and unexplored valleys and ranges. As experience and ambition grew with the considerable achievement, so did confidence in New Zealand ways of climbing. The development of this exploratory climbing linked New Zealand climbers to their country's pioneering ethos. A nationalistic assurance was created which enabled New Zealand climbers to look to peaks in the wider world.

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<sup>6</sup> There were many other, less elitist, British mountain clubs by 1940 but New Zealand climbers had no links with them.

It was the renewed link with British climbing in the early 1950s and success on one overseas peak which made public the nationalism which had been developing in New Zealand climbing. The collaboration of New Zealanders with the 'Mother Country' on Mt Everest in 1953, and the proclamation of the ascent as a British victory, could not disguise the fact that it was also a New Zealand triumph.<sup>7</sup> In the unrestrained enthusiasm for Hillary's spectacular 'conquest' of Mt Everest, public opinion in New Zealand shifted to accept climbing as an authentic local recreation. This gave mountaineering validity as a strand of the male New Zealand identity based on pioneering and physical culture. Hillary's deed was applauded as originating in the New Zealand way of life. If the country could produce people like Hillary and Lowe, then the health of the nation must, by extension, be in fine shape.<sup>8</sup> More than that, ordinary New Zealanders could identify with Hillary and bask in the reflected glory of his feat on the world's highest mountain. So Everest placed New Zealand on a world stage and a certain degree of nationalistic pride was not out of place. In the more than forty years since Mt Everest was climbed, Hillary's success has become more and more significant as a great sporting triumph for New Zealand 'manhood' and for New Zealand as a nation. Hillary himself has become a folk-hero, the archetypal New Zealander, and his climb has become the benchmark by which other New Zealand achievements, especially in sport, are measured. When New Zealand finally won its first cricket test match against England in 1978, some commentators compared the win to Hillary 'conquering' Everest.<sup>9</sup> The victory of Team New Zealand in the America's Cup yachting series in May 1995 was likewise deemed New Zealand's greatest sporting triumph since Hillary's ascent of Everest.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> It was very much a Nepalese triumph as well.

<sup>8</sup> The 'health' postage stamps for 1954 (in a regular series of 'health' stamps from 1929) showed a tramper looking towards a mountain range and dreaming of even greater mountains. This reinforced the view that mountaineering created mental and physical health - *The "Len Jury" 1989 Catalogue of New Zealand Stamps* p29-30

<sup>9</sup> D Neely, R King & F Payne *Men in White* Auckland 1986 p503

<sup>10</sup> R Becht *Black Magic* Auckland 1995 p6,34. One of those who made the connection was the Governor-General Dame Catherine Tizard.

Climbing was so easily accepted as part of the New Zealand way of life and identity in 1953, and thereafter, that its failure to become a strand of the New Zealand psyche and nationalism much earlier is surprising. The basis for acceptance already existed, for climbing included elements of pioneering, war and sport, all of which had major parts to play in the evolution of New Zealand's sense of self. Climbers were pioneers who explored and appropriated the landscape. They were in combat with themselves and with aspects of the natural world. Theirs was a sporting recreation of winners and losers. It was also a group activity which required co-operative endeavour and spawned a male mateship reminiscent of that which had long been associated with team sports and the battlefields of two world wars. Furthermore, mountaineering had always included aspects of the determination, adaptability and rugged independence which were held to be basic to the New Zealand identity. In the interwar period a greater variety of people began to climb, more often without guides, and the recreation gained increasing acceptance from the New Zealand public.

This somewhat belated approval of mountain climbing rested upon an initial public ambivalence about it. Climbing was never popular in the ways that a team sport like rugby was. Unlike the Everest Expedition of 1953, most climbing was comparatively private. On the remote margins of society, at the edge of the 'civilised' world, climbing was an activity which, for reasons especially of cost and distance, could not involve the general public. Indeed, it was always a sport in which individualism was significant, from the decision in 1881 of the Rev William Green to come to New Zealand to attempt Mt Cook, to the final success of Ed Hillary on Mt Everest.<sup>11</sup> Individual choice was always central to climbing. Some mountaineers reached few summits, others many. Climbers were pragmatic, but most developed an emotional and even spiritual attachment to the mountains. A few sought to push themselves to the limit, to the extent that climbing became more than just a recreation. For a time it might

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<sup>11</sup> Hillary's achievement was the culmination of a team effort, certainly, but ultimately it depended solely upon himself and Tenzing.

become an occupation which dominated their lives. More than that, climbers, for their own gratuitous reasons, deliberately made the decision to put themselves into situations of danger. This made climbing seem almost deviant in nature to a society which sought practical security. Accidents and deaths in the mountains seized the public mind, but acceptance of climbing and its incorporation into the national identity required more praiseworthy occasions of achievement. Seldom was New Zealand climbing identified with national prestige before the 1930s. Even the ascent of Mt Cook by young working-class New Zealanders in 1894 had been cavilled at by other climbers, personally affronted because they themselves could not achieve that first ascent. Other onlookers would have preferred the achievement to be middle-class and an occasion of imperial co-operation.

For many years New Zealand climbing was unable to escape its origins in the British class system. It was a recreation for an economic and social elite, often from overseas, though it was never as distinctively upper middle-class as in Britain. After a pioneering beginning in the 1880s, climbing was firmly class-based till after the First World War. The first mountain club contributed to this. Within a few years of its foundation in 1891, the New Zealand Alpine Club was excluding climbers who were labourers and acted as part-time, paid guides. Their independence, nationalistic aspirations and achievements were grudgingly praised, but they did not qualify as 'gentleman' climbers and were ignored. After the demise of the club, the new formalisation of climbing came through its association with tourism, also an expensive leisure pursuit. New Zealand mountain guides were most significant in the redevelopment of climbing after 1900, though their dominance meant that the recreation continued to conform to an imperialistic model. These guides, the premier colonial climbers, were of working class origin. Often their clients were from overseas. Neither group could be perceived as leaders of a New Zealand leisured elite.

Issues of gender also made it difficult for New Zealand climbing to fit into the nationalistic patterns which existed, based on male achievement and mateship in sport and war. Both these activities were often exclusive to men. It was never easy for women to go climbing in New Zealand, but it was always possible. From 1909 to the end of the First World War women were often the foremost 'amateur' climbers, though they nearly always used guides to assist them. The prominence of women in climbing made it difficult for the recreation to be accepted as a pioneering male activity. It was the movement of 'civilisation' more noticeably into the mountains which made it easier for women to climb, but such development and the involvement of women threatened to reduce the status of the recreation for men and to challenge their masculine physical culture. However, by the 1930s when a few women had reached the stage of climbing independent of guides and other men, or as equals with them, the male dominance in numbers and achievement was so great that, as with the British in the nineteenth century, there was no doubting that climbing was a 'male' activity. The position was similar after 1950, when some women again found it possible to achieve freedom and independence in the mountains. The leading, and indeed controlling, place of men in mountaineering and its organisations was confirmed by the climbing achievements of men overseas, especially in the Himalaya.

Yet Himalayan success and Hillary's next adventure in the Antarctica were to prove something of a distraction in the development of New Zealand climbing. Himalayan climbing and Antarctic exploration suited New Zealanders accustomed to expeditionary mountaineering which involved hard work but few specialist skills. Exploratory mountaineering and first ascents of the very highest peaks were only one focus of world climbing in the 1950s and 1960s. The Himalaya, Antarctica, and later the Andes in the 1960s, certainly gave New Zealand climbers aims and ambitions outside their own mountains, but only slowly did they adopt new techniques and practices of climbing. In world climbing, skills developed in extreme rock and ice face climbing were applied increasingly, not just in Europe and North America but in all mountain ranges,



to extend the realms of climbing possibility. In this type of climbing a much greater quantity and variety of specialised equipment was used. The adventures of New Zealand climbers overseas to some extent distracted attention from the possibilities of new technology and from the climbing still to be done in New Zealand on mountain faces. It was not till the later 1960s and 1970s that rock and face climbing in New Zealand reached a sufficiently high standard for the best New Zealand climbers to become comparable in skill and practice to leading climbers elsewhere.

In terms of public awareness, the status of climbing, and the alignment of mountaineering with New Zealand identity, 1953 was a watershed. The New Zealand success on Everest was unexpected to climbers and the wider society alike, but it suggested that local climbers were among the foremost in the world. Yet this international status was, as already noted, valid only in a limited sense, for New Zealanders did not use the techniques being developed elsewhere. Furthermore, the impression given by the ascent of Mt Everest was false, for it marked no break with the past in terms of style of climbing. Indeed, Everest was the very apogee of the evolution of New Zealand expeditionary mountaineering which itself drew inspiration from earlier pioneering. In the interwar period mountain exploration and climbing was based on urban clubs which securely located climbing and its participants in the wider community. These developments led to self-confidence and an extension of the same activity further afield. New Zealand mountaineers showed overseas that their experience had given them the necessary snow and ice skills, and the strength, resilience and versatility, to overcome many mountain difficulties. They had proved their worth firstly on their own mountains, and then on the highest mountain on Earth. There had been many prominent figures in climbing before Hillary, among the early pioneers, the guides, and the independent mountaineers of the interwar years, but 1953 was significant because it was then that climbers were added to the pantheon of national heroes. At the same time, like all other climbs, the ascent of Everest was also just another step in the long development of mountain climbing in New Zealand.

## APPENDIX A (Chapter Three)

### SOME NATIONAL FORMALISATIONS OF SPORT AND RECREATION

- |                  |                                                                                                                            |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bowls</b>     | 1886 [W Alloo <i>The New Zealand Bowlers' Annual</i> Dunedin 1907 p65]                                                     |
| <b>Tennis</b>    | 1886 [P Elenio <i>Centrecourt A Century of New Zealand Tennis</i> Wellington 1986 p1-5]                                    |
| <b>Athletics</b> | 1887 (First national championships) [P Heidenstrom <i>Athletes of the Century</i> Wellington 1992 passim]                  |
| <b>Rugby</b>     | 1892 [A Swan <i>The New Zealand Rugby Football Union 1892-1967</i> Wellington 1967 p15-26]                                 |
| <b>Cricket</b>   | 1894-5 [T W Reese <i>New Zealand Cricket 1841-1914</i> Christchurch 1927 p50]                                              |
| <b>Golf</b>      | 1893 (national championships)<br>1899 (national organisation) [G M Kelly <i>Golf in New Zealand</i> Wellington 1971 p25-9] |

## APPENDIX B (Chapter Five)

### CLIMBER SERVICE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

#### *Killed:*

**Brass, William (Bill):** guide, Hermitage - killed at Gallipoli 1915 aged 26  
[Press 29 May 1915 NZAJ Mar 1921 p57]

**Dennistoun, James (Jim):** Climber & explorer, Rangitata, Whataroa, Hermitage, Milford Sound - died 9 August 1916 aged 33 in a German hospital of the effects of wounds received when his aircraft was shot down in flames  
[obituary 'Roll of Honour' unknown paper 7 October 1916 WAK p59; letter G J Dennistoun to F J Rolleston 2 February 1917 Rolleston papers MS 446 folder 107 ATL]

**Ferrier, C:** guide, Dart valley with Bernard Head 1914 - Lieutenant, killed at Ypres November 1914  
[NZAJ 1921 p21-2,86-9, *Otago Witness* 11 February 1914]

**Head, Bernard:** climber & explorer, Hermitage & NW Otago - English but killed at Gallipoli 13 August 1915 serving with NZ forces  
[NZAJ 1948 p245]

**Lyttle, Albert (Bert):** climber & explorer, Fiordland - killed  
[NZAJ 1941 Jubilee Illustrated Supplement; Crozier p110]

**Murrell, John (Jack):** guide & climber, Hermitage & Fiordland - killed in France 8 Sept 1918 aged 31  
[NZAJ Mar 1921 p58]

**Talbot, Arthur:** climber & explorer, Fiordland & Waimakariri - killed in action Belgium 12 Oct 1917 aged 40  
[NZAJ 1941 Jubilee Supp; Crozier p110; Army Records]

**Ward, Charles K:** climber & explorer, West Coast & Waimakariri - died in mysterious circumstances January 1918 Walton-on-Thames, England aged 33; earlier service in Samoa  
[Army Records]

**Served:**

**Chambers, Hugh:** climber, Hermitage - served with the Royal Flying Corps in France, commanded a bomber

[NZAJ 1953 p297]

**Clarke, John (Jack):** guide & climber, Hermitage - served in Egypt and France, invalided home 1918 with foot trouble

[NZAJ 1953 p292]

**Duncan, E A (Alex):** Otago climber - NZ Field Artillery in France from 1916

[NZAJ 1948 p287]

**Fyfe, Tom:** guide & climber, Hermitage - service in France 1916

[NZAJ 1953 p286; J Haynes *Piercing the Clouds* 1994 p188-9]

**Graham, Alec:** guide, Franz Josef & Hermitage - enlisted 1916, 1917 to England, then France NZ Medical Corps, then infantry stretcher bearer, awarded Military Medal, seriously wounded December 1917, ten months convalescence in Britain, then again wounded and gassed November 1918

[A Graham & J Wilson p143-5]

**Milne, Frank:** guide, Hermitage - served 1916-19, badly gassed and eventually died of effects January 1933 aged 41

[NZAJ 1933 p273]

**Robertson, John:** Otago climber, - served with the NZ Camel Corps in the Middle East, then Major in the Army Education Service

[NZAJ 1955 p224]

**Ross, Malcolm:** climber, Otago & Hermitage - war correspondent

[G Scholefield *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* Wellington 1940, R B O'Neill comp *The Press* 1963 p148, M & F Ross eds *Noel Ross and his work* 1919 p5,12]

**Teichelmann, Dr Ebenezer:** West Coast climber & explorer - Captain NZ Medical Corps 1914-17, served overseas

[NZAJ 1939 p114]

**Wright, H Frank:** Otago climber - involved in war effort in Dunedin then in France

[NZAJ 1939 p119,123]

## APPENDIX C

## [Chapter Six]

## INTERWAR GUIDED CLIMBERS - SOME EXAMPLES

Law Professor Ronald Algie's poor eyesight was one reason he and his wife Adair Algie used guides from the Hermitage in the 1920s. In 1928 guides led them on first ascents in the Murchison valley, where there had been little climbing since 1914.<sup>1</sup>

The organist at the Christchurch Anglican cathedral, Dr John Bradshaw, was a busy man who suffered from ill-health. With the help of guides he ascended his first major peak on 7 January 1926 when he was 49, and he climbed for the next ten years.<sup>2</sup>

One who did not have inherited wealth was the Australian Marie Byles, a solicitor in Sydney. She organised and led the first overseas climbing expedition from New Zealand, to south-west China in 1938.<sup>3</sup>

Dora De Beer was a wealthy Dunedin woman who belonged to the Hallenstein family. She climbed in New Zealand in the 1920s and early 1930s, and after she moved to live in England she also climbed in Europe and China, always with guides.<sup>4</sup>

Katie Gardiner, daughter of a pioneering English climber, was over 40 when she first came to New Zealand in 1926 as a tourist following the death of her mother. She had done some climbing, and was so attracted by the NZ mountains that she returned to climb with guides for many years.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Press 11 June 1921 p11; AJHR 1928 p9; NZAJ 1925 p254-6, 1928 p25-36; J Graham p27-30

<sup>2</sup> AJHR 1926 p6; F K Tucker J C Bradshaw Christchurch 1955. There seems no reason for Brian Wyn Irwin's remark (Scrapbooks) that Bradshaw was: "A man who should not be let loose on a mountain".

<sup>3</sup> NZAJ 1925-38; AJHR 1925-37; M Byles *By Cargo Boat and Mountain* London 1931; Byles PP Mitchell

<sup>4</sup> AJHR H-2 1925 p7; D De Beer *Yunnan* 1970; NZAJ 1982 p134-5 (obituary); AGMANZ News June 1982 p5

<sup>5</sup> AJHR 1927+; NZAJ 1928+ esp: 1934 p289-94, 1978 p109-114; *Canadian Alpine Journal* 1931 p87-95

**Albert Grave**, a lawyer of Oamaru, climbed before the war. When he returned in the 1920s, sometimes with his daughter, it was reasonable for him, at about 50, to use guides.<sup>6</sup>

**Marjorie Edgar Jones** was from a well-off South Canterbury family. A very small woman, she was in her late 20s when she began climbing in 1926<sup>7</sup>

Another who depended on her own efforts for income was **Louie Roberts**, Principal of the Otago School of Massage [Physiotherapy] at Otago Hospital. For ten years from 1925 she used her holidays for climbing and mountain exploration.<sup>8</sup>

An Englishwoman of independent means, **Frances Roberts**, was a tourist in the mountains 1912-3. She settled in Dunedin in the 1920s and began climbing in 1930 aged about 60. She neither wished to climb without guides nor was capable of it.<sup>9</sup>

**Marion Scott** was the daughter of the first Dean of the Otago Medical School. Though trained as a kindergarten teacher, and active in the Plunket Society, did not need to work for a living. Her climbing, often with other women, began after a visit to the European Alps in 1926.<sup>10</sup>

The ambitious **Sam Turner** employed guides to win him a first ascent of Mt Tutoko when he was 55.<sup>11</sup>

In the summers from 1925 to 1929 **Mona Wilson** of Wellington left her dentist husband and children for climbing holidays on the West Coast, and guides were essential to her enjoyment and achievement.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> ODT 12 October 1912; AJHR 1922 p6, 1924 p7; NZAJ 1949 p131

<sup>7</sup> AJHR H-2 1926 p6; NZAJ 1994 p119 (obituary)

<sup>8</sup> NZAJ 1969 p287; C Dann & P Lynch *Wilderness Women* Auckland 1989 p32

<sup>9</sup> AJHR H-2 1930 p13, 1931 p14, 1932 p12, 1933 p14, 1934 p14, 1935 p15; NZAJ 1931 p125, 1934 p419,422-3, 1935 p146, 1978 p116. F Roberts *By Forest Ways in New Zealand* London 1916

<sup>10</sup> AJHR H-2 1927 p8; NZAJ 1977 p154-5

<sup>11</sup> Turner *Conquest* p215ff; NZAJ 1930 p139, 1950 p229-31; P Graham p232; J Ede *Mountain Men of Milford* Christchurch 1988 p112-3

<sup>12</sup> AJHR 1925-29; PC daughter Mary Howorth 20 January 1994



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June Ashurst née Gray & Hap Ashurst	15 January 1994	Mt Cook
Marion Borrie née Holloway	20 January 1994	Wanaka
Esther (Essie) Brown	13 January 1993	Christchurch
Alister Duthie	28 January 1994	Nelson
Russell Edwards	19 January 1994	Alexandra
Dorothy Fletcher née Graham	24 January 1993	Hokitika
Doug Frazer	15 January 1994	Ashburton
Jim Gilkison	19 January 1994	Queenstown
Felix Harvey	February-March 1992	Palmerston North
Una Holloway née Stevenson	12 August 1993	Christchurch
Marjorie Edgar Jones	13 August 1993	Christchurch
Mary Howorth née Wilson	20 January 1994	Wanaka
P.E. 'Sheen' Moffatt	12 January 1994	Christchurch
Doreen Murie née Pickens & Bob Murie	20 January 1994	Wanaka
Frank Newmarch	17 November 1995	New Plymouth
C. John Read	4 October 1993 5 April 1994	Wellington
Ivy Rollinson née Smith	5 April 1995	Paekakariki
Frank Simmons	16 November 1994	Lower Hutt
Rod Syme	10 April 1994	Hawera
Diana Wilson née Elworthy	18 August 1993	Taupo

Many of these face-to-face meetings were supplemented by written correspondence.

**b. Personal Communications: Other [PC]**

Tony Batley (Moawhango)  
 Stephen Barker (RD Hawarden)  
 Mavis Davidson (Leigh)  
 Jennie Gallagher (Wellington)  
 Adam Grant (Sydney)  
 Mary Green (Palmerston North)  
 John Haynes (Christchurch)  
 Robin Hodge (Wellington)  
 Sally Irwin (Sydney)  
 Pip Lynch (Christchurch)  
 Janet McCallum (Wellington)  
 Bob McKerrow (Hokitika)  
 Colin Monteath (Christchurch)  
 Basil Poff (Palmerston North)  
 Audrey Salkeld (England)  
 Brigitte Toyne (Sydney)  
 Lois Voller (Nelson)  
 Charles Warner (Picton NSW)

**c. Personal Material/Collections:**

Betsy Anderson, Omarama  
 Dorothy Fletcher, Hokitika  
 Felix Harvey, Palmerston North  
 John Haynes, Christchurch  
 Graham Langton, Palmerston North  
 Bob McKerrow, Hokitika  
 Colin Monteath, Christchurch  
 Bob Murie, Wanaka  
 Rod Syme, Hawera (deceased - courtesy his sons Rod and Doug)

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2 Vols 30 booklets Dept of Internal Affairs Wellington 1939
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- |                                                              |             |
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| Canterbury Museum Archives, Christchurch - Alpine Collection | [CMA]       |
| Mitchell Library, Sydney                                     | [Mitchell]  |
| National Archives, Wellington                                | [NA]        |
| New Zealand Alpine Club Archives Hocken Library, Dunedin     | [NZAC Arch] |

**f. Radio New Zealand Sound Archives: [RNZSA]**

- |            |                                                                        |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| R.A.Falla  | "Memoir on A P Harper" 5 June 1955 D5516                               |
| A.P.Harper | "Mountaineering in New Zealand" June 1949 D2099                        |
| K.Holyoake | "Announcement of Ascent of Everest" 2 June 1953 D918                   |
| G.Nixon    | "Interview with 'Dan' Bryant" c1953 D7070                              |
| J.Pascoe   | "Edmund Hillary" (after 1953) T218                                     |
| -          | "Alpine Club Diamond Jubilee Celebration" 1951 D3863                   |
| -          | "Harry Ayres on Climbing Mt Cook" T385                                 |
| -          | "Interview with Arlene Blum" 1980s T4005                               |
| -          | "Interview with Mick Bowie" D714                                       |
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| -          | "Peter & Alec Graham at NZAC Jubilee 1951" D3810-1                     |
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| -          | "Interview with E Hillary & G Lowe" 1952 D541                          |
| -          | "Interview with E Hillary" 1953 (before Everest) D554                  |
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| -          | "Interview with Chrissie Irving" 1961 T220                             |
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<i>The Australian and New Zealand Ski Year Book</i> 1931-1935	
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<i>The Canterbury Mountaineer</i> 1932-	[CM]
<i>International Journal of the History of Sport</i> 1987-	[IJHS]
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[OW]

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